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AUTOBIOGRAPHY

OF

ASA BIGGS

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INCLUDING

A Journal of a Trip from North Carolina to New York in 1832

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INCLUDING A JOURNAL OF A TRIP FROM NORTH CAROLINA TO NEW YORK IN 1832

Edited by

R. D. W. CONNOR

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The North Carolina Historical Commission

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AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF ASA BIGGS

DALKEITH, WARREN COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA,[1] March 1865.

For my children.

I, Asa Biggs, was born on 4th day of February 1811, so that now I am in the fifty fifth year of my age; and although I have passed through many vicissitudes yet upon a general review of my history I have abundant cause of gratitude and thankfulness to Almighty God for His supporting and directing care and for the eminent success with which I have been able to surmount difficulties and to attain among my fellow men my present distinguished position. I have concluded, my dear children, if time and opportunity are afforded me, to note for your instruction and information some of the incidents of *my* life, with the hope that this legacy of affection may prove useful and entertaining to you, in the journey of life on which *you* have entered, and may stimulate you to a course of conduct in which, on the termination of your journey you may have as much cause to felicitate yourselves as your affectionate father. I shall not write with a view of critical composition, but to detail facts, with such lessons of experience as may suggest themselves as I pass along. In February 1862 we were driven from our dear home at Williamston, (where you were all born) by the approach of the Yankee invaders up Albemarle Sound, after the fall of Roanoke Island.[2] About six weeks we lived at a small Cottage about 2 miles south of Tarboro' and from thence we removed to a dwelling, 3 miles west of Rocky Mount, where we continued to reside until I purchased this place in September 1863, and here we were all located in December 1863. Since the organization of the Government of the Confederate States of America I have been Judge of the Confederate States for the District of North Carolina. I selected this place as secure from Yankee raids and invasion, and although we have been excluded from society and the social intercourse to which we had been accustomed, and find it difficult with my limited means to obtain sufficient "food and raiment," yet so far we have not suffered, and the Lord providing for our wants we continue to this day, and I have confidence that He will still provide.

[1]In the handwriting of Asa Biggs. The original is in the possession of Judge Biggs' daughter, Mrs. Anna Van Cleve, of Princeton, N. J.

[2]Roanoke Island was captured by an expedition under Gen. Ambrose E. Burnside, February 7, 1862.

YOUTH AND EDUCATION

And now to recur to early scenes and to the dawn of life. My father, Joseph Biggs, was a small merchant in Williamston when I came into this world, and was a Baptist Minister. My mother Chloe Biggs was his third wife. She was the daughter of William Daniel who resided on Smithwicks Creek. My father, by his two first wives, had several children, nearly all of whom had left him at my earliest recollection, and the children by my mother, who reached maturity, were 1 Joseph D., 2. Asa, 3 William, 4 Kader, 5 Louisa F. So far as at present advised all are now living. Our brother William, last heard from in 1862 had been driven from his home about 6 miles from Vicksburg by the Yankee invaders there: The others are all now residing at Hilliardston, being also refugees from their former homes and hearth stones, by the cruelty of the public enemy. My father died in the year 1844 then in his 78th year. My mother survived him until the year 1845, when she too fell asleep in her 70th year, in prospect of a better world. And here let me bear testimony to these dear departed ones. Through much difficulty did they rear their family; being poor and illiterate they had to rely upon their own indomitable energy and their moral and religious characters for support. They gave to us all the elements of education to the utmost of their ability and moral precepts and examples which have survived them; and can enable me to say with truth, no better parents ever lived than your grand father and grand mother Biggs. By the exertions of my father and others an Academy was established in Williamston about 1820 and in that Academy I received all the educational advantages I ever enjoyed. I grew very rapid[ly] and at the age of 15 was of manly stature weighing 180 and about that age left school and substantially the home circle, to complete my education as a merchants clerk. In 1825 I resided a short time with a Mr. Martin, a merchant in Washington. In 1826 I resided at Hamilton and was Clerk for a Mr. Edwards, a merchant at that place. In June 1827 I engaged with Mr. Henry Williams of Williamston, to superintend his mercantile business at that place for one third of the nett profits and so continued for two years. My income by this arrangement I think was about $500 per year. About this time I concluded to read law and for the next two years until June 1831 I acted as Clerk for Mr. Williams at an annual salary of $350, he furnishing me board. I note this to show my beginning, and it certainly was small! and yet, it, no doubt, was exceedingly useful to learn me economy, diligence and perseverence. I had no legal instruction, and consequently labored under many disadvantages in pursuing my studies, but I applied myself diligently in reading, whenever I could, consistently with my duties as

Clerk. I determined to apply for license and in July 1831 visited Raleigh for that purpose. In addition to doubts as to my legal qualifications I needed six months age to make me 21, and altogether my anxiety as to success was great. The Judges however (Henderson and Hall[3] who examined me) greatly to my relief treated me very kindly: omitted to ask me any question as to my age and gave me license to practice law in the County Courts[4] and I returned home with a light and joyous heart. The County Court of Martin County was held in a few days after I reached home and during that week I realized in fees about fifty dollars which was a good beginning and gave me much encouragement.

AT THE BAR

The first Monday in August I attended the County Court of Pitt where I made my maiden speech in an address to the Grand Jury, among strangers. I then took the Counties of Martin, Pitt, Bertie, Edgecomb [e] and occasionally Washington and Green as a circuit but the three first I could only attend regularly in the County and Superior Courts during my professional course, which continued for about 25 years. When I came to the Bar, the Courts I attended had several old and able lawyers practising, and the prospect of my success appeared very problematical; but I commenced with a determination to succeed if possible, attended the courts regularly, applied myself unremittingly to my studies, and gave diligent attention to any business confided to my care. Occasionally and year after year the older members of the Bar retired, my practice increased, and altho' at no time did my annual receipts amount to more than $4000 generally for the last ten years to not more than $2000, (my circuit being very contracted) yet I consider myself remarkably successful, by economy and prudence, to have accumulated a comfortable living, by my profession, particularly when my expenses began to increase rapidly upon the increase of my family and I have succeeded in providing for the wants and education of a large family of children.

MARRIAGE AND FAMILY

On 26th June, 1832, I was married in Bertie County to your mother Martha Elizabeth Andrews, who is the daughter of Henry and Elizabeth Andrews, but who died when she was an infant and your mother was raised by her aunt Mary Higgs, the sister of your grandmother Andrews; and they were the daughters of your great grand mother Cotton

[3]Leonard Henderson, Chief Justice, and John Hall, Associate Justice of the Supreme Court.

[4]Prior to 1868 two licenses were required in North Carolina, one admitting to practice in the county courts, the other admitting to practice in the Superior and Supreme Courts, but the latter could not be obtained until the applicant had practiced at least one year under a county court license.

of Bertie County. We have now lived together for upwards of 32 years. She has had 10 children of whom 8 are now living: the other 2 died in infancy. Nothing remarkable occurred in my history from 1832 to 1840. My wife brought to me a small estate consisting of several slaves and some other property which materially assisted my small accumulations. It was constant, unremitted labor and an effort to provide for a growing family. In 1830 I purchased a lot in Williamston on which I built an office and enclosed it with a good substantial fence. After my marriage until January 1833 we boarded with Mr. Williams and the years 1833 and 1834 we resided at a rented house in town and during that time I built a dwelling and outhouses on my lot—to which I have since greatly added as my family increased; and there we continued to reside until we were driven from home in 1862.

IN THE LEGISLATURE

In 1832 I attended a District Convention as a delegate from Martin County to nominate an elector on the Jackson-Van Buren ticket. Party Spirit ran quite high at this period and the Democratic Republican party in this State were divided—a portion preferring Barbour to Van Buren for Vice President. I had made up my mind to attach myself to the Democratic party believing that the principles of the party promised more good to the country: although in this I differed from my father and the rest of the family who were in the opposition. Soon after my entrance into active life and until 1840 I was repeatedly urged to engage in politics, but persistently declined, knowing that I could not with justice to my family and future prospects enter into political controversy, without neglecting my private affairs which required my undivided attention. In 1840, however, an election was pending of the most excited character—the contest between Harrison and Van Buren for the Presidency: and both parties were greatly excited, and the result considered of the highest importance. For the first time in the history of the County of Martin, a convention of the people was called to nominate candidates for the General Assembly. At this meeting, which was large and general, Capt. Jesse Cooper,[5] who had represented that county for 20 years presided and by it he was nominated as a Candidate for the Senate and me [sic] as a Candidate for the House of Commons, and I was informed that my nomination was unanimous. I did not participate in the proceedings of the meeting, being advised that my name would be urged. From such a nomination I concluded there was no escape, and accepted. I canvassed the county thoroughly and although an opposition ticket was run, I was elected by an over-

[5]He was a member of the House of Commons in 1822, and 1825-'30, inclusive; and of the Senate in 1831, 1834-'42, inclusive.

whelming majority. The discharge of the duties of this responsible position gave me great anxiety—the Legislature was decidedly Whig and the State had voted for Harrison by a large majority.[6] I endeavoured, however, faithfully to maintain my principles, though in a small minority. In 1842 I was again nominated and elected to the same position, though I had Democratic opposition. It had been the invariable custom, up to this time, for candidates to "treat" with spirituous liquors while canvassing and at the election. I adopted the custom in 1840 to a moderate extent, but my observation satisfied me this practice was highly pernicious, and ought to be abandoned and therefore I refused to "treat" in 1842. This originated numerous false reports, as to my purposes—such as a desire to compel by law all the fruit trees to be destroyed and to prohibit the introduction of foreign liquors. This gave me an opportunity to discuss the question fully, and I boldly defended my position and denounced the custom, as injurious to the public morals and interest. Since then I have never treated, as was the former practice, allthough I have been a candidate for popular suffrage repeatedly and after the lapse of years I still commend my course on that occasion as proper and entitled to imitation by others. In 1844 I was nominated for the Senate, and was opposed by the old Senator Cooper, who then denounced nominating conventions, and a prominent Whig was also a candidate. This placed me in a very embarrassing situation and there was a reasonable prospect by the division of the Democrat party the Whig would be elected. I conducted the canvass without appealing to passion, firmly but temperately arguing principles and I was triumphantly sustained by the people—obtaining a handsome majority over both of my opponents. Cooper receiving but 25 votes. By this I was transferred to a new theatre and the Session of the General Assembly was stormy and excited, the parties being *equally* divided in the Senate, and the responsibility of taking a prominent position in the debates and proceedings being thrown upon me! but here as elsewhere I endeavoured to discharge my duty with fidelity to the party I espoused, and the great principles of administration in which I believed the good of the country was involved. This public service gave me considerable prominence in the State and the approbation of my fellow citizens was sufficient to gratify any reasonable ambition and although it interfered to some extent with my domestic affairs and somewhat with my professional duties I very cheerfully made the sacrifice, as a duty I owed to my family and my country. There followed however a period to "try" me thoroughly.

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[6] 13,141.

REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS

The County of Martin had been attached to the ninth Congressional District in 1842, having little or no intercourse with the other Counties in the District except Bertie. The District was decidedly Whig and gave in 1844 in the Presidential election between Clay and Polk, nearly a majority of 1000 for the Whig ticket. Late in the Spring of 1845, the Democratic party held a District Convention in the lower part of the District, in which the county of Martin was not represented and much to my surprise and embarrassment nominated me as a Candidate for Congress. The almost certain prospect was defeat; the Whig candidate Col. David Outlaw[7] was a gentleman of talent and worth. In a large number of the Counties I was personally unacquainted, while he was well known —for many years had been the solicitor for that judicial District. If I did not accept I ran the risk of incurring the censure of friends whose good opinion I highly valued and if the improbable result should be success, it would effectually throw me out of the practice of the law and deprive me of the personal supervision of my growing family. I took time for one week, to deliberate, at the end of which I accepted the nomination and entered actively into the canvass. I concluded it was *my duty*. The principles of the two parties were debated with ardor but with proper temper and personal respect. And here I will note my entire disapprobation of the vicious practice of public men becoming personal enemies and indulging in personal reproaches while discussing political principles. It prostitutes the public morals, unnecessarily engenders strife, exerts a baneful influence and develops the worst passions of the human heart. It gives me pleasure to say that Col. Outlaw and myself canvassed the District on two occasions at a very excitable period in 1847 during the progress of the Mexican War, without an unkind personal remark; and although we did not spare each other's political positions or arguments yet we maintained our social intercourse unimpaired and my personal respect for him increased rather than diminished. And I had as well mention now that in 1848 I canvassed an electoral District in the Presidential election of that year with Edward Stanly,[8] estimated one of the most violent partisans in the State, and who I regret to say has since become a degenerate son.[9] He was

[7]David Outlaw was a native of Bertie County. He was graduated from the University of North Carolina in 1824, studied law, and practiced at Windsor. In 1831 he was elected a member of the House of Commons and served through 1834. He was elected as a Whig to the Thirtieth, Thirty-first, and Thirty-second Congresses, serving from March 4, 1847, to March 3, 1853. He again served in the House of Commons 1854, 1856, and 1858; and in the State Senate in 1860 and 1866.

[8]Represented Beaufort County in the House of Commons in 1844, 1846, and 1848; Speaker in 1844 and 1846; member of Congress, 1837-'43, 1849-'53.

[9]In 1853 Stanly removed to California, where he became prominent in politics. In 1862 President Lincoln, in an effort to organize a "loyal" state government in North Carolina, appointed Stanly "governor." Stanly followed the Union army to New Bern, where he issued his proclamation and set up his government. Soon perceiving the hopelessness of his task he resigned and returned to California. His conduct was bitterly denounced by his former friends and acquaintances in North Carolina.

elector on the Taylor and I on the Cass ticket; and but one unpleasant passage occurred between us which was at the conclusion of the Canvass; and his unkind personal remark was retracted as soon as the heat of the moment passed and we closed the discussion personal friends. My conclusion, therefore, is, that if a public man, while firmly sustaining his personal dignity, does not unnecessarily provoke personal criminations, the vicious example of public men debasing themselves and the public mind by personal feuds will be avoided. The great issues at that day were a modification of the Tariff of 1842; a United States Bank instead of the Independent Treasury, and a distribution of the proceeds of the public lands. The question was also debated as to the propriety of terminating the joint occupation of Oregon by Great Britain and the United States. I was in favor of a modification of the Tariff so as to make the burdens of taxation more equal, being opposed to the protection afforded to northern manufactures; I was opposed to a United States Bank and in favor of the sub-treasury. I also opposed a distribution of the proceeds of the public lands, and was in favor of giving notice to Great Britain to terminate the joint occupation of Oregon. Col. Outlaw took opposite positions to those I assumed. The result was, I was sustained by a majority of 146 votes, showing a very close race, out of 10,000 votes. I attributed my success mainly to the position I took on the Tariff question. During the canvass some of my friends, knowing the former party majority against me and governed by their ideas of policy, advised that in certain counties I should not argue against or for certain measures, in which I disagreed with a majority of the people. But my judgment and principles taught me differently and therefore on all occasions and in every county I boldly advocated the cause I represented and I therefore went to Congress a representative man, no voter being able to reproach me with concealing my opinions or deceiving him as to my position.

Upon taking my seat in the House of Representatives at Washington in December 1845, I felt oppressed with the weight of my responsibility, and being so deficient in education, and a general course of reading and political information I greatly feared I should disappoint the expectations of my friends and should fail to do credit to myself and the State. Every thing was new and I must learn everyday. I had the disposition of application and therefore was assiduous in the acquisition of knowledge to fit me for the duties of the Station. For one month I gave myself but little sleep and no exercise and this with the change of habits and diet came near prostrating me. After feeling the effects upon my constitution, which before I thought could stand any amount of such labor, I was compelled to change my

course, but the effect of this unremitted application I did not recover from for two years. We had a very protracted session and one incident gave me great pain and severed a friendship in a very unpleasant manner. Mr. W. H. Haywood was one of the Senators from the State, elected partly by my vote when I was a member of the Legislature. The tariff question was one in which my constituents felt a deep interest. The House of Representatives had passed a bill to modify the Tariff for which I had voted. Parties so stood in the Senate that the vote was doubtful, and as the time for voting approached it was reported that Mr. Haywood would vote against the bill. I proposed to the Democratic members of the House to call upon him and remonstrate. They declined, none of them having assisted in his election but myself. I sought an interview in which we had a very animated and excited conversation at the door of the Senate Chamber; the last we ever had. Shortly afterwards on the same day he resigned as Senator which placed the fate of the bill more doubtful.[10] Fully impressed with a sense of my public duty and feeling sensibly the unpleasantness of my situation I, on the next day, in the House, publicly denounced his conduct. It is proper to state that Mr. Haywood was universally condemned by his party in this State for his course, and never recovered any political standing thereafter. During this Session the War with Mexico was recognized and efficient measures adopted for its prosecution. For all these measures I voted. I had become greatly chagrined at the corrupted course of public affairs and my North Carolina ideas of frugality and economy in public expenditures were greatly shocked. Long absence from home had deranged all my private arrangements and my family were suffering for my personal superintendence. At the commencement of the short Session in December 1846 I wrote to the leading men in the District declining to run again as a Candidate and requesting that steps might be taken to run some other person at the next election. In response to these letters there was universal dissent, and I fully ascertained that the public dissatisfaction and censure would be general and I should incur the disapprobation of many of my warmest and most valued personal and political friends. I concluded therefore to sacrifice my personal wishes and desires to a sense of duty. In 1847 Col. Outlaw was again my competitor and all the old political issues were evaded or abandoned and nothing was discussed in this canvass but the Mexican War and its incidents. In connexion with this some of my votes were misrepresented by my political opponents in some of the Counties, by which I was made to appear as opposed to an increase of the soldiers pay and the result was that the former party vote was nearly rallied

[10]For an account of this incident, together with Haywood's defense of his course, see Connor, R. D. W., *North Carolina Review*, July 2, 1911.

in opposition to me and my opponent was elected by upwards of 700 majority. I can truthfully say that except for the mortification and disappointment to my friends, after the excitement of the moment passed, the defeat was neither unexpected nor viewed with regret.

I could now honorably retire from public life, and could devote myself to the prosecution of my profession and attention to my family. I found, however, as all will who have tried it, that it required time to recover practice lost by irregular attendance on the Courts. But I set to work with diligence in reading to refresh my mind for the practice and regularly attended the Courts, by which I partially, if not fully, succeeded in regaining my business.

DELEGATE TO CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION OF 1835

I will now before I proceed further supply an omission at the proper place. I have stated that I persistently declined engaging in politics until 1840. But in 1835 I was elected and served as a member from the County of Martin in the State Convention called to amend the Constitution of the State. I was then only 24 years old and I considered myself highly honored by this position of distinction. This body was composed of the most experienced and talented men in the State, "grave and reverend seignors"; and my association with such a dignified and able convention was an admirable and useful school for me, being nearly the youngest member of the body. I did not participate in the Debates, but was an attentive and careful learner, and always feel gratified that my native county thought me worthy to represent them in such an important assembly.[11]

RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCES

And now I approach a period in my history of a deeply interesting character. Surrounded as I had ever been by religious influences and associations my mind had often been drawn to a consideration of my latter end, but no decided impression had ever been made. I had generally been guided by moral principles, and had never indulged to excess, or to any great extent, in the vices and wickedness, common to many of my acquaintances and associates. Endeavoring to guide myself by the strictest rules of honor, and sobriety, absorbed in the pursuit of wealth and fame, and the gratification of what I esteemed a laudable ambition; I concluded that it was time enough, in my declining years, to turn my attention to religious matters—very suitable for those in advanced life, but for me, they would seriously interfere with my success at present. Above all, I entertained a decided opinion that no person could pursue the profession of Law, and be a Christian; and to abandon my profes-

[11]His associate from Martin was Jesse Cooper.

sion, would disappoint all my hopes of wealth and fame. I quieted my uneasiness of conscience which occasionally disturbed me, by the consideration that I stood much better than many others, and I had a better opinion of myself than many who professed religion. I always paid due respect to religious characters, and religious ordinances and worship; frequently attended preaching of all denominations—more generally upon Methodist service as their Meeting House was on adjoining lot—and often the Ministers and members of that society visited my house, partook of my hospitality, and with some of them, I was on terms of intimacy and friendship. I often passed through periods of religious excitement, and while occasionally serious impressions would force themselves upon me, I condemned the noise and tumult of such scenes. When I was engaged in religious conversation, it was in reference to the differences in doctrine and practice between the Baptists and Methodists, and, if I was with a Methodist, I argued for the Baptists and, if with a Baptist, I argued for the Methodists. But my most mature reflection, could not explain satisfactorily how God could be just, and save a portion of the human family, and condemn the residue. Thus I speculated and acted, and thus I should have speculated and thus I should have acted, until this day—aye, even to the last day of my earthly existence; if, God in his mercy, had not opened my eyes, and changed the whole current of my thoughts and speculations.

"In the early part of April 1851, there was a religious excitement in the Methodist Church in this town.[12] For some time before this, I had discovered that my wife was deeply concerned on the subject of religion and during this excitement, she attended the meetings, and appeared to be more powerfully operated on. I was laboring under a violent cold and hoarseness, but I went with her on Thursday night, and after the sermon, when an invitation was given to go up to the altar, I came to the conclusion that she was prevented from going, by a fear that it would not be agreeable to me; and, to relieve her, I went across the house, and told her if she felt an inclination to go, to do so; and, at my solicitation, she went up, and I went with her. After the services, we came home, and I did not feel any particular impression on my mind—it appeared to be entirely sympathetic for her and we went to bed, and I took some paregoric for my cold. This was 10th April 1851. About 2 o'clock of that night, I awoke in great agony of mind—at first thought I was laboring under fever, but soon became satisfied that my mind was powerfully awakened as to my awful condition as a sinner, so that in a few minutes, the visitation was so great, as to compel me to cry aloud for mercy and arouse the whole house. I thought my mental

[12]Williamston.

powers were giving away. This continued for two hours. Some Methodist friends, who were staying with us, sent off after Mr. Carson and Mr. Martin the preachers—they came and prayed—but no relief could I find. After about two hours I became more composed, but the melancholy and depression of spirits continued, more or less, and all the time very great, until the next Tuesday evening 15th. On Friday and Saturday mornings, I went to the prayer meetings. On Saturday, I went to Skewarkey, and heard Bro. Hassell[13] preach from 33 Psalm 18 and 19th verses. Monday was Court day. I went to the Court House and staid a short time. On Tuesday I did not go. On Tuesday evening, while meditating, the 8th verse of 3d Chapter of John came to my mind with such power I repeated it aloud: and I became thereafter more composed, and for several days my soul was drawn out to praise the Lord for his goodness and love; and frequently I was in a flood of tears praising and blessing the Lord. On the Saturday before the 5th Sunday in June, being Union meeting at Skewarkey—the 28th, I was received a Member of Skewarkey Church; and on the 29th baptized in Roanoke River at Williamston by Elder C. B. Hassell in the presence of a large crowd of spectators. At some other time I propose to write my exercises more at length."

Commencing with, and including the quotation points above, is the Copy of a memorandum I made in January 1853, which I now transcribe as fully disclosing my feelings at that time; but it signally fails to give an adequate description of my conviction, and as I humbly trust, my conversion by the Holy Ghost, from darkness to light, and from the power of sin and Satan to the service of the true and living God. If I make the attempt to "write my exercises more at length," I shall fall infinitely short to give you a faint representation of my conflicts, trials, hopes and rejoicing; but, I venture to say, that the awful gloom, that hung over me at the time I awoke out of sleep, may be compared to an impenetrable overhanging cloud, ready to burst upon me in all its fury, and to sink me to everlasting despair and ruin; while I was anxiously looking for some ray of light, through the gloom, by which I might hope to escape the impending danger; but no glimmer could I discover. I felt indeed, that I was a poor, miserable and lost sinner; condemned to punishment for my iniquities; and my cry was, Lord! save or I perish! All my moral rectitude did not avail me. I could see nothing to extricate me from this awful dilemma. My intense suffering, forced me to cry out in despair, and I readily concluded that I was going deranged, and frequently enquired, Am I losing my mind? During this deep

[13]Cushing Biggs Hassell, a noted Primitive Baptist Elder. For an interesting biographical sketch by Francis D. Winston, see Ashe, S. A. (ed.): *Biographical History of North Carolina*, V. 124.

distress, all my sins and improprieties seemed to be brought before me, and I am reminded that I felt sincerely desirous, to make friends with all those with whom I was not then on friendly terms, and felt willing to accommodate every difficulty I had ever had with my fellow men. I was willing to obtain relief in any way, and from any body, and readily attended the meetings with the hope of being relieved: yet my inclination was to seclude myself from observation and read, and pray, and meditate in secret; and thus I was engaged the most of the time for several days. Nothing that was said or done appeared to soothe or console, I was unalterably miserable, and could find no solace or hope. And here, I had as well transcribe in full, the text of Bro. Hassell to which allusion has been made, *33d Psalm 18 and 19 verses.* "Behold, the eye of the Lord is upon them that fear him, upon them that hope in his mercy; to deliver their soul from death and to keep them alive in famine." It is a blessed promise to a sin-sick soul, but from it, or his sermon could I derive no consolation. I had no sudden deliverance from this deep distress. The first composure and serenity of mind I enjoyed, and that slight, was on Tuesday evening when, as I have heretofore said, the 8th verse of 3d Chapter of St. John was forcibly brought to my mind. It reads thus, "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof; but cans't not tell whence it cometh or whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the Spirit." Commencing here, my mind grew more calm and composed, and my soul, for several days, was melted in thanksgiving and praise to God for his loving Kindness and for being delivered from the deep gloom through which I had passed. My wife and myself, had often conversed about family prayers. It seemed impressed upon me for years as proper, but I never could determine to discharge this duty; but during the week, one night, I called the family together and in a trembling manner, bowed at the family altar, and, I hope, most sincerely implored mercy and supplicated blessings, from our Heavenly Father. In the discharge of this duty, I experienced more, *sudden,* sensible, consolation, than I have ever enjoyed; and therefore I continue the same to this day, believing it a duty acceptable to God. My mind was soon drawn to the consideration of Christian association; and a desire was excited to partake of the Lord's Supper. I had conversation on experience with some Baptists and Methodists; among the latter were some friends I highly esteemed, and whose exercises, induced me to believe they were truly converted by the Spirit of God. But when I compared their professed faith with the Bible, I concluded they must be in error. And yet I reasoned—how is it that Christians so essentially differ as to doctrine and ordinances? Does God permit his children to see so different[ly] when they

are led by the same Spirit? This gave me much trouble; but it finally occurred to me that it may be permitted for some wise and good purpose; as inscrutable to finite creatures as the dispensation of His providence in temporal matters, where we see the righteous and pious bowed down by poverty and disaster, when the wicked and vicious are permitted to prosper. The important question for my decision and action, is, what path the lights afforded *me* teach *me* to walk; and, I soon came to the conclusion, that it was my duty to attach myself to the Primitive Baptist Church at Skewarkey; altho' by so doing I should incur the contumely and disapprobation of all the world besides. From April to the last of June when I was baptized, I passed through many scenes, I attended the Supreme Court and argued my cases there; I visited Chapel Hill at the commencement exercises of the University of North Carolina; and was thrown into a variety of company and associations; and in reviewing my course and feelings, it was made evident to my mind, that the finger of a merciful God had directed my pathway down into the liquid grave in which I was buried in the Roanoke River; and, on that day, if I could have had my choice, I would preferred to have had the whole world present to witness my profession. And yet, on that day, never did I feel a more humbling sense of my weakness and ignorance about divine and heavenly things. For many months, did I enjoy refreshing seasons in attending the churches and upon the administration of the word and ordinances; but for many years back I have failed to receive those sensible, and feeling, tokens of love I then enjoyed; yet, I thank God, I continue to this day, more confirmed in my faith, and no cause to regret that I am one of that despised hardshell sect every where spoken against. The foundations of God standeth sure; and I believe we have built upon the foundation of the prophets and apostles, Jesus Christ being the Chief corner stone; and the gates of hell shall never be able to prevail against it. If in this I am not deceived, why should I be afraid or ashamed of man whose breath is in his nostrils? or why should I shudder or attempt to avoid, the reproaches of a gainsaying world. Perhaps I have written enough of my religious exercises; possibly too much to interest you; as you cannot in a great degree appreciate it *now;* yet I hope, and pray, that in years to come, you may be abl [e] to add yours to my testimony, and rejoice in the same truth: And, while I would not desire in the slightest degree to fetter your consciences in regard to religious faith, nor would I wish to influence you except for good, I would however, firmly, but affectionately impress upon your youthful minds, never to permit yourselves to join the cry of contumely and scorn against the old Baptists, much too frequent in this sin-disordered and false professing world.

I could greatly enlarge in noting my spiritual conflicts and warfare, and give you some lessons from my experience in relation to spiritual wickedness in high places, but it would occupy too much time and space, to but little profit I fear, and therefore I pass on to the relation of other incidents of my history: remarking here that your mother was also received a member of the Skewarkey Church and baptized on the 2d Sunday in Nov. 1851.

CODE COMMISSIONER

In 1851 I was associated with Judge Saunders and B. F. Moore Esqr. in a commission appointed by Gov. Reid to revise the Statutes of North Carolina. This Commission was suited to my taste and inclination and I entered upon the duties with alacrity and diligence. Judge Saunders soon resigned, and the whole responsibility rested upon Mr. Moore and myself. We found it impracticable to report to the Session of 1852 and the General Assembly of that year by a law continued Mr. Moore and myself as Commissioners and authorised us to proceed without an associate. It was an arduous labor, and I was absent from home at Raleigh very frequently; engaged often night and day for months. It was to me an interesting and useful pursuit adding greatly to my professional knowledge. During this employment I was again solicited to engage in political life. I was nominated in 1852 as a candidate for the State Senate from Martin County but I declined the nomination so flatteringly tendered; assigning among other reasons the responsible duty in which I was then engaged, from which I would be diverted, by being a representative in the Legislature.

The General Assembly of 1852 rearranged the Senatorial Districts, and as the County of Martin theretofore entitled to a Senator, did not then pay into the public treasury sufficient taxes, my County was attached to the County of Washington to form a Senatorial District.[14] As parties were pretty equally divided in the State, and the Counties differed in politics, great interest was manifested to secure the representation of that Senatorial District; and in the Spring of 1854, I was nominated as the Democratic candidate for the District and strongly urged to accept. I was not unmindful of the unimpaired partiality of my fellow countrymen and the gratitude I owed them for my support and elevation in the past; and the duties of the Commission being nearly performed, I consented to accept the nomination; and entered actively into the canvass. I was strongly opposed, and the result was doubtful. I felt much anxiety about it, because I was then desirous

[14]Under the Constitution of 1776 each county had one senator; but the Convention of 1835 amended the Constitution, and the amendment was ratified by the people so as to limit the Senate to 50 members chosen from districts to be laid off by the General Assembly, on a basis of the taxes paid into the State Treasury.

to be on the floor of the House to superintend the passage of the Revised code through the Legislature. The professional reputation of my colleague and myself was involved, in obtaining the consent of the Legislature to pass the revisal as we had prepared it, knowing how liable it was to be marred and disjointed by amendments, I was sustained by a majority of 21 votes only in the District, so equally balanced were the parties of that day.

UNITED STATES SENATOR

The session of 1852 was the regular period for the election of one Senator of the United States and the Session of 1854 of the other. In consequence of the nearly equal division of parties in 1852 a contest arose between Mr. Dobbin, who was the regularly nominated candidate of the Democratic party, and Judge Saunders, who opposed him; and the session terminated without an election. The election of two Senators was therefore thrown upon the Legislature of 1854, and of course excited much feeling and interest. Many names of high prominence were canvassed in the newspapers, and among a large number my name was mentioned; but I can with sincerity say to you that while it was gratifying to my ambition, I certainly felt no confidence or expectation that I would stand prominent[ly] for the position. I did not reach Raleigh until the night before the session was to open; and then I ascertained, that an active canvassing had been going on for a week, by aspirants for these distinguished positions, and that my name was generally discussed. It was soon evidently the desire of the members to decide these elections as early as practicable, and to that end a caucus of the Democratic party was held on Tuesday night. I did not attend, although urged by some of my friends to do so; nor would I visit the members, as customary with others, concluding that it was a position not to be attained by personal solicitation. The session of the caucus was protracted but the result was that I was nominated for the six years term and Gov. Reid (then Governor) was nominated for the short term of four years. On Thursday the election was held by the General Assembly and Gov. Reid and myself were elected according to the nominations, which placed me as the successor of Mr. Badger.[15] Thus, unsolicited on my part, was I elevated to one of the most distinguished places in the gift of the State: and certainly enough to gratify the highest, laudable ambition. I received this distinction with great diffidence and a feeling sense of my deficiencies, but as a great honor to my County and family. With a firm resolution I determined to devote myself unremittingly to the best interests of my native State and if possible reflect credit upon my constituents and myself. Upon a review of all my surroundings I

[15]George Edmund Badger, Whig, had been Senator since 1846.

strongly impressed upon my young friends, that the great element of my success was a firm but temperate maintenance of principles, pursued with energy and a settled conviction of their truth. It was a remarkable success of one, unaided by family or fortune, with all the disadvantages of early life and a limited education, emphatically "the architect of his own fortune"—rising to a most exalted position suddenly and unexpectedly. I can sincerely assure you that no fawning sycophancy or corrupting influence was practiced by me. I became the untrammeled and honored representative of a proud sovereign State: and one, not of the least of my gratifications, was the credit I had thus been able to give my dear children, with the hope that neither of them would ever bring reproach upon or tarnish the fair name I had thus attained. And now in humble adoration to that kind Providence who has so signally exalted me above my fellows, I would implore Him to watch over, guide and direct my offspring to the same honorable, if not exalted end. As my Senatorial term did not commence practically until December 1855, though the nominal beginning was 4th March 1855, I continued a member of the Senate until the Legislature adjourned: and being at the head of the large joint committee of both Houses, on the Revised Code, composed of the ablest members,[16] I was laboriously engaged on that subject, but I did not neglect a faithful discharge of my other legislative duties. And here I am reminded of a temptation to which I was subjected during the session of a most trying and unpleasant character. There were many schemes of internal improvements. Some of the most extravagant and visionary kind; and altogether of the most alarming magnitude; but they were urged with earnestness by members from the different localities, many of whom had cordially voted for me and who sought my aid and assistance for their favorite schemes. A strong appeal was made to me: that as I was about retiring from the Legislature, I could run no risk of my constituents by supporting these measures, and thereby I could sustain my friends. Governed however by a high sense of public duty, and my integrity of character, as the representative of the wishes of my district I firmly opposed many of these darling projects of my friends, and thereby for several weeks I became odious to many, who in the early part of the Session, seemed greatly attached to me. I was gratified however before the Session terminated, as many of these projects failed for want of a *"faithful"* coöperation among those engaged in the "log rolling," and to which was attributed their defeat, above all when the enormous liabilities proposed, was calmly considered, jus-

[16]The other members of the Committee on the part of the Senate were William A. Graham of Orange, William Eaton, Jr., of Warren, Thomas S. Ashe of Anson, Charles F. Fisher of Rowan and John H. Haughton of Chatham; on the part of the House, Jesse G. Shepherd of Cumberland, A. J. Dargan of Anson, Patrick H. Winston, Jr., of Bertie, J. S. Amis of Granville, and W. T. Dortch of Wayne.

tice was done to my course; and I regained the good will of all, I think, before we separated. This is another instance, to which I direct your minds, where substantial good was accomplished, by resisting a specious, and trying temptation to error.

And, now I was necessarily compelled to change all my arrangments for the future. It was a thorough disruption of all my professional, domestic, business and family affairs, to enter upon the sea of political life; in which I will say that, although it was gratifying to my ambition, yet the turmoil and strife necessarily incident, did not suit my inclination. Add to this, I was to be separated from my christian friends and associations; and I felt greatly oppressed with my responsibility and the trials to which I must be subjected. And after I have had long experience of these responsibilities and trials, I will truly advise you that the station of a faithful public servant is not a "bed of roses," but it is certainly true that the highest stations are strewed with thorns and difficulties.

Gov. Reid resigned his office of Governor and went to the Senate in 1854. I took my seat there in December 1855—a stranger to the members—with a desire to be useful as I could not hope to be brilliant. I soon discovered that the same influences operated there as in other places. It was evident to my mind a lamentable decay of virtue was progressing in our public councils: that there was no amendment for the better since 1845—on the contrary things were growing worse.

With a nominal Democratic party majority of upward of 15 out of a Senate of 60 members, I found myself frequently voting in a minority of from 10 to 12 members—rarely could we reach the highest figure—particularly on important questions of public expenditure. The prevailing desire seemed to be, to procure large appropriations for any and every object: and there were constantly presented new propositions for lavish expenditures: on which sufficient votes were generally obtained from the Democratic party, with the opposition, to constitute a decided majority. It may not be interesting, to diversify this narrative, with one or two illustrations of the corrupting influence brought to bear upon Congress. I will select one of the smallest of these abuses.

For some time previous to 1845 there was considerable discussion in relation to Books furnished to the Members of Congress. It was represented as a growing abuse and I felt desirous to correct it. The custom was for some old member at the commencement of Congress to move a resolution directing the Clerk to purchase for and furnish to the new members the books formerly furnished to the old members and subsequently the appropriation was made in the general appropriation bill. At that time the value to each member was nearly one thousand dollars—

the cost to the government and the appropriation was generally about $75,000. Soon after I took my seat as a member of the House, the usual motion was made by Mr. [Robert C.] Winthrop of Massachusetts. Upon its introduction, a member from Maine, (a new member) violently opposed it in an hour's speech, in which he charged corruption and alleged that members were in the habit of selling their books for three or four hundred Dollars, and pocketing the money, instead of distributing the books for general information—the ostensible object of the appropriation. Thereupon Mr. Winthrop asked that his resolution might be laid upon the table, until an investigation could be had, and called upon the member from Maine to move a Committee to relieve the house from these serious charges and expose the guilty. I was much pleased with this movement, with a fond hope that this great outrage would be corrected. A committee was raised, of which the member from Maine, of course, was chairman. I sought his acquaintance and encouraged him to make a full exposure. I frequently called upon him to inquire how he was progressing with the investigation, and at first he stated, he had not convened the Committee, as he was collecting information to be laid before them when they assembled. Shortly, it was said, that nearly all the Books, necessary to supply the members, belonged to the Government, and were then lying in a room in the Capitol injuring, and but a small amount would be necessary to complete the set. The result was, the Committee never were convened and after some months delay the resolution of Mr. W[inthrop] was passed, and the appropriation was subsequently made. It was evident to me, that the member from Maine soon surrendered to the corrupting influence brought to bear upon him, or was made the dupe of those interested in that question. I afterwards learned, it was true, there was a large number of the Books required, lying in a room in the Capitol, but they were not owned by the Government, but belonged to the booksellers who had purchased them from old members.

This abuse continued and increased, until public sentiment, compelled Congress to pass a law, prohibiting any appropriation, upon a resolution in regard to Books as had been before customary, and such was the law when I went into the Senate. Notwithstanding this law, the practice continued until the value of the Books to each member, was about $1500, and the appropriation about $150,000. The House of Representatives passed the usual resolution and appropriation. The Senate, inconsistent with their usual course, rejected that item in the appropriation bill and that with other matters became a subject of conference between the two Houses. I was placed upon the Committee of Conference. A compromise was made with the consent of a majority of the

Senate Committee by which a part of the Books was appropriated for. I opposed the report of the Committee in the Senate and was gratified to find that my position was sustained by a majority and the report not concurred in—something very unusual upon reports of Committees of Conference. The bill was sent to another Committee, and they could not agree, and on the very last day of the Session another Committee was raised upon which I was again placed. The Conference was not harmonious. I would not yield a principle, in defiance of a solemn act of Congress: but the bill was an important one, involving millions for necessary objects and a majority of the Committee again made a compromise striking down the appropriation and providing for a distribution of the Books in the Congressional Districts. I still opposed it, but it was passed in the expiring hour of the Session. Now from this you can form some faint conception—faint though it will be—of the extravagance, waste and corruption, that controlled our public council, yearly and daily destroying the vitals of healthy, honest legislation.

I give you another incident. According to the long habit of the Senate, the Senate Committees at the commencement of each Session, were arranged in caucus by the majority party, taking a majority on each Committee and leaving to the opposition to fill up the minority in their caucus: and as new members of the majority came in, they were placed at the foot of the Committees and gradually went up by seniority until they reached the head. The consequence was that Gov. Reid and myself, being new members, were placed in apparently, no prominent positions. I protested in caucus against this injustice [to] Gov. Reid, but I was assured by old members, it was the only rule that could be adopted to avoid difficulty, after long years of experience and I of course yielded. I was placed on two or three committees, but the only one of importance was the Committee on Territories (of which Judge [Stephen A.] Douglas was chairman), then not very important but subsequently obtained great importance, in consequence of the exciting questions that arose as to the establishment of territorial governments, and which shook the Union from its base.

During the first session my position was clearly defined by my votes, invariably against wasteful extravagance—generally voting as I said in a minority of 10 or 12. When the Committees were being arranged for the next session, a member of the Committee of Finance, (one of the most important and distinguished of the Senate and of which Mr. [R. M. T.] Hunter of Va. was chairman) insisted that he should be taken from that Committee and that I should fill his place: assigning as a reason that as the Committee was then constituted, a majority

were for large appropriations—that he was compelled frequently to go for these appropriations against his better judgment, that it was necessary that Mr. Hunter should be sustained in his economical efforts, and that I was the member to place on that Committee. The change was made. I felt it a high compliment: but you will from this gather, how much prostituted were members of Congress, extending to the august body of the Senate, who, themselves had not the manly virtue and independence to resist error, but who required a check from their fellow members to avoid the inevitable ruin to which we were driving.

The tendency of everything in the government, according to my opinion, was toward ruin. The picture presented to my mind every day was sad. The whole soul of a large number, was absorbed in schemes and arrangements to secure themselves in power: and one election was just over when plans for another, to secure success, were projected. My party were in a majority, and of course responsible, as a party, to the people for a proper administration of public affairs: and there I found myself bearing the responsibility without the slightest means to correct mal-administration; and no prospect for the better, in the future: because this state of things was increasing and becoming firmly fixed so far as I could see or hope. I would not have you believe there were no exceptions, among our public men, to this general deterioration. It gratifies me to say, I found many, but they were, like me, powerless for good. I would not be guilty of the affectation and vanity of stating to *you* that *I* was not often misled by these evil influences, and therefore did not indulge in error: but my general course, I am sure, was dictated by an elevated desire to act for the good of the Country and to resist every corrupting influence. The experience of my Senatorial course, ending in 1858, forced the conviction upon my mind that the government of the United States was becoming thoroughly corrupt, and that in a few years it would fall to pieces by its own corruption and I so expressed myself to my friends.

When I went to the Senate Mr. Pierce was President. His general measures of administration met my cordial support. During my term he retired and I witnessed the inauguration of Mr. Buchanan; and his administration generally met my approbation while I remained in the Senate; but his subsequent course in relation to secession I emphatically condemn.

It is as well to note here that I visited home at Christmas 1855 and carried with me on my return to Washington City all the family—where we resided until the adjournment of Congress in the Summer of 1856. During the next Session, being the short Session, the family, with the exception of Lucy, remained at home. She accompanied me

to Washington. In January 1858, the family again removed to Washington and remained until the Spring of that year. Part of the time we resided at the Capital we boarded, but a portion of the time kept house in furnished lodgings which I rented by the month.

The gayety, extravagance and society of the Metropolis, was unsuited to me; and soon after first reaching there I sought Christian association and conversation, more congenial to my feelings, when relieved from the cares and perplexities of my public station. I attended divine worship of different societies; but at length I met with a few Old School Baptists and attended the preaching of the word by Elder Wm. J. Purington, in a delapidated house in an obscure part of the City; and here I enjoyed more real pleasure than in the magnificent temples which decorated the city.

UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE

In the winter of 1857-58 Judge Potter, the District Judge of the United States for North Carolina, died: having held the office for upward of 50 years. It was a station desirable to me, as honorable; and consistent with my former habits of life, I preferred being relieved from the irksome position I occupied, though, it certainly was one of the most distinguished in the Country. I expressed these feelings to some of my friends, and after the disposal of some important business then pending in the Senate, in May 1858, I was nominated, by President Buchanan, as Judge, and confirmed unanimously by the Senate; and thereupon I resigned my seat as a Senator from North Carolina when about half of the term for which I was elected was unexpired. In this case, as heretofore, I made no personal solicitation for the office, and took no steps to secure it; but it being offered, with profound gratitude to my State for my elevation to the Senate and for the constancy and fidelity with which I was encouraged by a large number of admiring Constituents, yet with a decided conviction that I could be more useful in this sphere, or at least could pass down the current of life more gently, giving place to some more talented and faithful statesman in the distinguished arena of the Senate, I left public life with pleasure; and, although I parted reluctantly with many valued friends, I retired to the judicial bench, without regret.

In consequence of my mental anxiety and the turmoil and irregularity of the life I was compelled to live, it seriously impaired my physical powers. I reduced very much in flesh, and on my return, my friends at home looked at me with astonishment; but resuming the comparative quiet of my former life, and again adopting my regular habits I soon recuperated and was prepared for labor.

The duties of my office required a course of reading essentially differing from any former course, and I sat to work diligently to qualify myself for the responsible duties of United States Judge. The District Courts were held twice a year at Edenton, Newbern and Wilmington and the Circuit Court once a year at Raleigh. At the latter Court the Presiding Judge was an Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States when attending and Judge Wayne was assigned to my circuit. For many years in consequence of the age and imbecility of Judge Potter, the Courts had become formal farces. I reorganized them, adopted necessary rules to render them efficient, and prepared to make the District Courts useful. I held also the Circuit Court unaided until Nov. 1860 when for the first and last time Judge Wayne presided.

Having had some correspondence with him I ascertained before we met, that he positively denied the right of a State to secede from the Union and as Lincoln had been elected President, and the excitement in the South was great it was not improbable that this might become a practical question and require the decision of the Judiciary. I supposed if it were to arise at that term it could only be made in his address and charge to the Grand Jury; and as I entertained a decidedly different opinion on the subject, I prepared in writing the conclusion of my judgment, to be used if occasion called for it. He however, charged the jury without alluding to the subject, but I will here transcribe what I intended to say, for preservation, and to show my position at that time.

The following was prepared to be delivered in case Judge Wayne was not present or in case, if he were present I should charge the jury:

"Treason against the United States, consists in levying war against them, on in adhering to their enemies, giving them aid and comfort. The Constitution provides, that no person shall be convicted of treason unless on the testimony of two witnesses to the same overt act, or on confession in open Court. An act of Congress passed in 1790 provides, that if any person owing allegiance to the United States of America, shall levy war against them, or shall adhere to their enemies, giving them aid and comfort, within the United States or elsewhere and shall be convicted on confession in open Court, or on the testimony of two witnesses to the same overt act of treason, whereof he shall stand indicted, he shall suffer death. And it is a high misdemeanor by the same act, for any person having knowledge of treason, to concede the matter, or not to disclose it to the public authorities. These are offenses against the United States and cognizable in the Courts of the United States only. But it is also true that Treason may be committed against the State government, forming a State offense cognizable in a State Court and punishable by State authority. A period may arrive in the history of our Country, when it may be proper and necessary to consider and decide the appalling question, whether a citizen owing allegiance to the United States, by rendering obedience to the commands of the Sovereign authority in his own State,

after the State has solemnly decided to separate herself from the Union. [Sentence not completed.] It would however be premature in the Judiciary to prejudge that important question, yet undecided by the Courts; and it being yet a political question (about which however I entertain a decided impression) I deem it improper now judicially to express or intimate what my opinion is.

"It is fervently hoped by me that the alarming circumstances now surrounding us may be so overruled as to render unnecessary the decision of this question. But if unfortunately a decision shall be forced from the Courts, I trust they will exhibit the same firmness and wisdom that have marked the course of the judiciary in many trying periods of our history."

The following was prepared to deliver in case Judge Wayne should express an opinion differing from mine:

"With deep regret I am compelled to differ with my associate, the Presiding Judge of this Court. On ordinary questions I should feel disposed to defer to the greater experience and wisdom of my associate as it is very desirable when practicable that there should be a concurrence of opinion among Judges, so as to give the decisions of the Courts greater weight. But now I am forced to express an opinion, upon a question of the gravest character without argument and without the judgment of a Superior tribunal; although I am free to say, it is a question that has occupied much of my consideration, and particularly within the last few months. It is an extraordinary occasion, and I feel the full force of my responsibility. I have heretofore said, in my opinion, it is premature in the Judiciary, considering the gravity of the question, to prejudge it, by expressing an opinion in advance of a judicial case arising in which the light of argument may greatly assist in forming a correct opinion. And I the more regret this conflict of opinion, because it occurs when my associate and myself meet for the first time to coöperate in the discharge of our official duties, and at a time of great political excitement in the Country upon the very question now brought up.

"I am well aware that the right of State Secession from this Union, has been for a long time a controverted question, upon which Statesmen and the brightest intellects of the Country have entertained opposite opinions; and therefore I might well hesitate as a judicial officer, in volunteering an opinion, until a case is made which rendered it necessary to pronounce my judgment. But no alternative is now left me and I will not shrink from the expression of my opinion, forced upon me as it is: because by remaining silent *now* I should tacitly adopt the opinion of my associate. Perhaps also I am in error in concluding it is improper to withhold the opinion of the Court from the Grand Jury charged with an enquiry into all violations of the criminal laws of the United States as the question involves a violation of criminal law.

"*I* hold therefore that the States, in forming the Federal government acted separately as equals and sovereigns, with no common Superior, and that the first duty and obligation of the citizen was due to his State; and upon the adoption of the Constitution of the United States by his State, this duty and obligation is no less due to the United States, but because it is at the command and clothed with the sovereign authority of his State. That the citizen while his State remains a member of the Federal Union must conform to the Constitution of the United States and the Constitutional laws of the Federal

government, although they conflict with the Constitution and laws of his State; and where there is a conflict of opinion as to what laws are constitutional, the proper tribunal to decide that question is the Supreme Judiciary of the United States. The question being thus decided, it is the duty of the citizen to acquiesce in, and maintain that decision.

"But whenever any State in her Sovereign capacity (and I mean by that, the people of a State duly and legally assembled in a convention by the proper authority, with the same formalities and regularity as conventions were held to ratify and adopt the Constitution of the United States originally) shall solemnly so decide she has the right for sufficient cause (of which she must be the judge, as upon her alone rests the heavy responsibility for such a fearful act) to voluntarily and peaceably secede from the Union, which she voluntarily entered: and thereupon, a citizen of such State is absolved from his allegiance to the United States, and will not be guilty of treason to the United States for obeying the commands and maintaining the laws of his own State.

"This is my decided judgment now, formed after much reflection upon the theory of our government, and the history of the day in which the Federal Government, was created; and in my humble judgment, in the language of one of North Carolina's most cherished sons, (the late Mr. [Nathaniel] Macon) 'this right is the best guard to public liberty and to public justice that could be desired'; and if, generally or universally admitted, is the best Security for the permanency and perpetuity of the Union.

"I cannot now, and therefore do not propose to allude to the arguments for and against this right; and it is with entire deference, I declare my opinion on this grave subject; but I repeat no alternative is now left me, and I therefore respectfully but firmly announce this conclusion as the firm conviction of my best judgment."

SECESSION

I will retrospect a little. The Democratic party in 1860 were divided greatly in their preferences of men for the Presidency, and there was a conflict of opinion as to the course to be adopted in creating territorial government; some in favor, and others opposed to what was called "Squatter Sovereignity." The opposition, then organized in a party, called themselves "Republicans" (a desecration of that old party name) claimed the right of Congress, to prohibit slavery in the Territories, and to legislate for them; and avowed their determination to do so if they obtained the power.

The Democratic Convention assembled at Charleston in the spring of 1860, to nominate a candidate. There was a failure to nominate. The Convention adjourned to meet in Baltimore early in the Summer. There was great excitement through the Country. Although removed from political life, I felt a deep interest in the alarming state of public affairs. All the old political organizations had dissolved, except the Democratic party, and I was convinced that upon the disruption of that party, as the country was then situated, there was a virtual dissolution of the Union. I felt an earnest desire to save the Union, if the rights of the

South and the States, could be preserved. I cannot better illustrate my position, than giving the substance of a conversation I had, when I was a Senator, with Mr. [Lawrence M.] Keitt of S. C. a member of the House. He expressed a confident opinion, that we could live no longer in harmony with the Yankees; and he was then in favor of a dissolution of the Union, and insisted upon a course of action on some pending question to which I dissented. I remarked, that I felt as determined to maintain our rights as he could possibly be; but the difference between me and him was we were governed by different motives of action—he thought dissolution desirable—I did not think so—he would shape his course to attain that result—and I would do all I could, consistent with our rights and honor, to avoid what I should consider a sad calamity.

After the adjournment at Charleston, and before the meeting in Baltimore, I visited Washington to inform myself personally of the prospect for the future; and while there, I had full and free conference with many distinguished public men. The aspect of affairs then has been verified too truly by subsequent events. I called upon Gen. Cass, then Secretary of State, and our conversation made a deep impression upon my mind. He remarked that things "were sadly out of joint. It seemed that the people were demented. My section," said he, "appeared to have run wild. Altho' I have been identified with my State for forty years, I do not suppose, upon my return home, I could be elected a constable: and recently a gentleman from your section expressed to me a hope that the union might be dissolved. My conclusion is, if this calamity is not avoided, these States in a short time, will be cut up into three or four independent republics, warring against each other. I am now numbering my days, and cannot hope to remain here much longer, if I shall be able to get through with the duties of my present office, and I trust I shall pass away before this said event happens." Neither of us could realize that the catastrophe was so near at hand; although the forebodings were then significant, Mr. Cass then agreeing with me that a disruption of the Democratic party seriously threatened such a result. A dissolution of the Union was the inevitable effect of a false religion, a fanatic philanthropy, a disregard of plighted political faith, and the non-observance of rights secured by the Constitution by which every State was guaranteed equality, notwithstanding their domestic institutions, and the consequent estrangement from the Union, of the affections of a section of the country, it being manifest that this Union had become their oppressor instead of their defender. The election of Mr. Lincoln as a sectional candidate, with his avowed principles of abolition and the supremacy of Congressional legislation, totally subversive of the

rights of the States, was the climax of endurance; and a separation followed, first of the Gulf States and upon the issuing of his infamous proclamation of April 1861, intended to coerce the States into submission, Virginia, North Carolina and other States ranged themselves with their Southern Sisters in resistance.

The Legislature of North Carolina, in February 1861, submitted the question of a State Convention to the votes of the people, providing that in case a majority should so decide, it was to assemble immediately, and delegates were elected at the same time a vote was taken on the convention question. At this election Martin County voted for a Convention and Elder C. B. Hassell was elected the delegate from that County. A majority in the State however (though small) voted against a Convention, and North Carolina therefore for the present decided to remain in the Union.[17] I was decided[ly] in favor of a Convention to deliberate as to the course the State ought to take. I retained my office, because I deemed it imprudent to resign it until the State seceded, or such controlling circumstances occurred as to induce me to conclude that it could be no longer held with honor and consistent with the duty I owed to my State. To show you however my feelings and opinions before the proclamation was issued, I transcribe here some propositions I reduced to writing at that period.

1. I unequivocally admit the right of a State to secede from the Union, and thereafter, I deny that the United States government has any power or authority within the jurisdictional limits of such State.

2. If the United States government attempts to coerce a seceding State, I think this a sufficient cause for North Carolina to immediately secede from the Union and unite her destiny and resources with the seceding States.

3. As the Union is now dissolved by the withdrawal of several states, I consider it important that the whole of the Southern States should act unitedly and harmoniously, as the only means to avert civil war.

4. At present I cannot see a probability of living in harmony, with any of the non slaveholding States; but if a Union can be reconstructed by which the guarantees contemplated by Mr. Crittenden's resolutions, can be obtained, then I am for a reconstruction upon those resolutions as a basis.

5. If that is found impracticable, then I am for secession of North Carolina and coöperation with such of the Southern States as may agree to form a Southern Confederacy, and I am utterly opposed to a Union of a Central Confederacy of the border slaveholding and non slaveholding States, and thereby cutting loose from the Gulf States.

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[17]The vote of Martin County was: For Convention, 662; against Convention, 22. The vote of the State was: For Convention, 46,672; against Convention, 47,333.

6. I will not be pledeged to any particular course of action, except as indicated in the above propositions and conclusions, intending however to exercise my best judgment to maintain the institution of domestic slavery, and desiring to that end the coöperation of all the Southern States.

Stirring events succeeded each other rapidly. A failure by the Peace Congress to settle difficulties was followed by the Proclamation of April 1861; and thereupon I determined no longer to hold office in the government of the United States, and prepared, and immediately transmitted my resignation; a copy of which I here transcribe.

WILLIAMSTON, N. C., April 23, 1861.

TO ABRAHAM LINCOLN,
President of the United States.

SIR:—I hereby resign my office of District Judge of the United States for the District of North Carolina, being unwilling longer to hold a commission in a Government which has degenerated into a military despotism. I subscribe myself *yet* a friend of constitutional liberty. ASA BIGGS.

I thereby cut myself loose from all official connexion with the Government, and took my stand as a private citizen of the State, and advised and acted as the convictions of my judgment dictated. Another Convention was called, to convent on *20th May 1861,* and an election of delegates was ordered on 13th. My name was placed before the people of Martin as a delegate, and I was elected with but little show of opposition. And now, my hoped for quiet is disturbed. I am again forced into the Stormy arena, at an awful crisis of my country's history. I did not hesitate. I encouraged the formation of military companies—assisted in, and promoted their equipment and supplies, and urged upon all, to defend the legacy of our ancestors—the right of self government—to the last extremity. The County of Martin furnished immediately two volunteer companies, commanded by Capts. Lamb and Clements, and subscribed several thousand dollars to furnish equipment and supplies; and the company commanded by Capt. Lamb left the wharf at Williamston for the defense of the coast of North Carolina on 20th May 1861—the day that the State formally seceded from the Union.

I took my seat as a member of the State Convention at Raleigh on 20 May 1861, and so united and harmonious was public sentiment then, that before the close of that day, an ordinance of secession *unanimously* passed, separating the State from the Union and declaring our determination to assert the right of self government—a right inestimable to freemen and formidable to tyrants only. When I recur to the scenes of that day, my heart exults with pride at the proud position my native State then assumed: and I can but regret that any thing has since oc-

curred, to cast a reflection upon the patriotism of any portion of my fellow citizens: but candor and truthfulness require one to say that *many*, then voting for secession, have since greatly embarrassed our efforts to sustain the position then taken. In a few days, the State became a member of the Provisional Government of the Confederate States of America and elected delegates to represent the State in Congress; and for weal or woe, identified herself with the Southern Confederacy, by subsequently adopting the Constitution of the Confederate States.

I was laboriously engaged in the Convention as long as I remained a member, being placed on the most important Committees, by the appointment of Mr. Weldon N. Edward, the venerable President. Whatever may be the criticism on my course in that body, I will say that I never proposed or urged any measure, that I did not hope and believe would promote harmony in the maintenance of our cause—being deeply impressed with the conviction that our success depended upon our unity.

CONFEDERATE STATES DISTRICT JUDGE

On 17th June 1861, I was appointed by Jefferson Davis, President of the Confederate States of America, during the Provisional Government of the Confederate States, Judge of the District Court for the District of North Carolina; and this appointment was confirmed by the advise and consent of the Congress, and a commission was sent to me dated 13th August 1861. Upon the formation of the Permanent Government of the Confederate States under the permanent Constitution, I was appointed by President Davis, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate, Judge of the Court aforesaid; and my commission furnished me is dated on 15th April 1862, and I took the oath of office before Judge [R. R.] Heath of the Superior Court Bench of North Carolina on 27th May 1862.

The Convention had several recesses, one or two while I was a member. I continued a delegate until I thought it was time the Court was organized, and that my attention was required to the prize cases which were accumulating at Newbern. I resigned my seat in the winter of 1861-62 and Mr. D. W. Bagley was elected my successor. Again did I retire from public life, and since then I have been discharging the duties of Judge. As remarked in the outset, I was driven with my family from home, by the enemy in February 1862, and have been residing at this place since Dec. 1863; looking on with the deepest anxiety at the struggle which has been progressing for four years; with an abiding belief in our ultimate success, because I do firmly believe our cause is just. Frequently, however, I have been greatly depressed in spirits, with pain and grief realizing what I did not expect

to see prevail so extensively in the South—a spirit of covetousness, selfishness, extortion and avarice that induces me to suppose this cruel war is still to be prolonged, until a just and merciful God, shall humble our people more, and extirpate the distracting and fell spirit that so generally prevails. How any patriot, philanthropist, or Christian can permit himself to be absorbed in making a fortune out of the miseries of this war, is past my comprehension! How men of standing and wealth, can remain at home, accumulating their thousands and millions, at the expense, misery, and discomfort of the families of those brave and gallant soldiers, who are protecting our rights at such great sacrifices, is but another evidence of the ingratitude and depravity of poor, fallen, human nature! How any Southerner, not deprived of his manhood, and spirit of freedom, can be willing to submit to the insolent foe who demands our subjugation at his feet, with his heel in our faces, the confiscation of all our property, with the ignominious and debased condition of becoming the slaves of slaves—is to me distressingly painful and amazing!

SONS IN CONFEDERATE ARMY

In April 1861 my son William, then about 18 years old, and in his Junior year, was at school at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Before the secession of the State, he applied to me for permission to join a company who proposed to tender its services to Prest. Davis. I declined to give my consent, advising him to apply himself diligently to his studies, as he might soon be deprived of any further educational advantages, a matter of vast importance to him. The students however became so much excited, that college exercises were partially suspended, and he ventured to visit home. He reached there in the morning of the day, when we were engaged in forming the volunteer companies in the County. He remained in the house but a few minutes, and asked my permission to attach himself to one of the companies, which I promptly granted.

He was elected 3d Lieut. of Capt. Lamb's company of 12 months Volunteers, called the Roanoke Guards, and started with that company to Cape Hatteras on 20th May. It is remarkable, they carried no guns, no intrenching tools, and for weeks were stationed on the bald sea beach without any means of defence. In August 1861, the garrison at Fort Hatteras were captured by the enemy, carried as prisoners to New York, and from thence to Fort Warren in Boston harbor, and were kept for 8 months before they were exchanged. Upon a reorganization of the company, William was elected 1st Lieut. Subsequently promoted to the Captaincy of Company A, of 17th Regiment of North Carolina Troops, and attached to Martin's Brigade; in which capacity he has been serv-

ing ever since. The Brigade is now commanded by Genl. Kirkland attached to Genl. Hoke's Division. He has been through a great deal of hard service, in North Carolina and Virginia, and engaged in several battles; but through the mercy of God he has escaped with one slight wound; and has had but one serious spell of sickness, thus far. Certainly, we have cause to adore the superintending and preserving Providence of our kind and Heavenly Father![18]

In July 1864, my son Henry having reached the age of 17 years, by my consent, attached himself to Capt. Manly's Battery of Artillery of Cabell's Battalion, stationed between Petersburg and Richmond, where he has been serving ever since; and so far has enjoyed good health. He has not yet been engaged in a battle.

I cheerfully give up my boys to the service of my Country, though the sacrifice is great. I would consider myself and my family disgraced, if we desired to, and could relieve ourselves from a participation in this great conflict for our liberty. I fervently pray, that they may be spared; but I endeavor to make myself resigned to any event: with faith, that God will order all things for the best, and that out of this bloody carnage, some great good is to be accomplished.

This war for Independence has now been in progress for more than four years, with varying success. And such a gigantic war we do not read of in modern history! The sacrifice of human life, and some of the most worthy of the Country, is great and painful: and the end of this carnage is only known to Almighty God. It is a contest on our part for the right of self government—a right inestimable to us, and which we cannot surrender without dishonor. Our country is invaded by those who demand our subjugation and submission to their rule, the utter annihilation of our personal rights and our rights of property, the consequences of which would be our degradation and ruin.

I know that *I* am rapidly passing from the stage of action. In a few short years the place that now knows me will know me no more forever: but I feel great solicitude that you, my dear children, may be permitted to enjoy the blessing of freedom that I have so long possessed. If we are unsuccessful I shall die with a conviction, that you and my countrymen will become the most degraded people upon the face of the earth. If we are successful and our people, as I hope they will, learn, from our sad experience, the errors of the past, reform their vices and confess their sins and transgressions, God in his mercy may make us a prosperous and happy people.

It is amazing how successful we have been in resisting the enemy, with our limited resources, compared with our foes. It is evident to me

[18] A history of this regiment by Second Lieutenant Wilson G. Lamb, Co. F, is in Clark, Walter (ed.): *North Carolina Regiments*, 1861-'65, II, 2-13.

that the Almighty arm has been interposed in our behalf; and this gives me confidence that *He* will yet deliver us. But we are a sinful nation I am compelled to confess; and this war has developed a spirit of covetousness, extortion and a greed for gain in the Southern Country which I did not expect to see. It is poor, fallen, unregenerate human nature!

In my opinion the proximate cause of this war is a *false religion,* an anti-christian spirit which I think will be punished severely by a just and holy God. We have suffered immensely and the clouds now look lowering and the prospect is exceedingly gloomy, but God knows all things and what is best, and I endeavor to be calm and resigned to *His* holy will.

This much I now say in regard to the pending war. Much more I could write on this all absorbing subject, but you have had experience of the evils of the times as well as myself; and some of you can appreciate the horrors, anxieties and difficulties of the past four years, and I pray Heaven that you may never have such painful and melancholy experience for another four years of your lives. I have been driven from my own home twice by fear of being captured by the enemy, and am now under apprehensions that I shall be compelled to leave my family again. If I should not I may hereafter continue these memoirs; but if I do, it is probable, this will be the last I shall ever write in this form to you, and I therefore commend and commit you to God, praying him to preserve and guide you, with the admonition to live soberly, righteously and godly in this present evil world.

JULY 1, 1865.

It is with a sad and heavy heart I resume these memoirs. Most important events have occurred, the consequences of which I cannot foresee and a blow has fallen upon our family circle, heart-rending and irreparable. Our country is subjugated and our dear boy Henry is no more —another sacrifice of blood, another mournful calamity of this cruel war. Genl. Lee evacuated Petersburg and Richmond about 1st April and on 9th surrendered his army to Genl. Grant at Appomattox C. H. Va. On 8th (Saturday) late in the afternoon Manly's Battery was attacked by the enemy near the Court House and Henry was wounded in the neck. It paralized him, rendered him speechless and lock jaw ensued. He was carried to a poor man's house by the name of Tyree on Sunday and there he lingered until 12th, (Wednesday) when he expired about 9 o'clock P. M. and was buried in the private burial ground of a Mr. Overton about ½ mile from Mr. Tyree. We have assurances he was well cared for and decently interred. He was the only member of the

battery that we could hear was injured, and why was it that he was permitted to fall? Oh God thou knowest! What a bitter pang! We looked anxiously for him among the returning soldiers; we hoped to see him hourly make his appearance. We sought diligently to ascertain his situation, until we were informed he was wounded. A glimmer of hope still sustained us until a visit of William to the place (about 10 miles from Appomattox Court House) to enquire after him, brought us the certain and melancholy truth that he was dead. That awful truth sunk our hearts, threw a gloom over the household, plunged us into the deepest grief, and night and day has his dear mother mourned, the loss of her absent boy with broken lamentations! Henry was a sprightly, a very intelligent youth, energetic, patriotic and hopeful, a dutiful and promising child: and we had hoped for him a long life of usefulness to the family and to the country. God thought best to remove him from this scene of strife and turmoil, that he might not witness the subjugation of his country: and I humbly trust has taken him to a world of rest and peace. We bow! O God! to thy righteous will and pray that this great affliction may be sanctified to our good. Let the thought console you, my dear children, that he died in the defence of his country in the path-way of duty. May you all discharge your duties with the same fidelity and die in the same honorable way. Let us humbly submit to the dispensation of a righteous Providence, who for some wise purpose inscrutable to us, has removed from our family the loved one, who so frequently enlivened our home circle and promised so much for the future. It teaches us among other lessons that the young also die and the importance of being prepared for that change whether old or young. It has left an aching void, that nothing but the consolations of God's Spirit can supply and to *Him* I commend you for light and comfort, and pray that *He* may sustain and support us in this our day of trial and grief.

DOWNFALL OF THE CONFEDERACY

On the day that Henry was wounded I was in Raleigh to visit William who was sick in the hospital. He obtained leave of absence for a week to come home and recruit, but before the week expired Genl. Johnston retreated, Raleigh was occupied by the enemy, he was prevented from joining his command until Genl. Johnston surrendered his army to Genl. Sherman about 20th April. Subsequently, as we hear, the other military forces of the Confederacy surrendered, and thus the Confederate military organization was disband[ed] and the enemy victorious. The President of the Confederate States, Jefferson Davis, and many other prominent Southern officials have been arrested and are

now in prison. In one short month our government terminated, and we are placed at the mercy of the United States military authorities. The President, Mr. Lincoln, was assassinated at a theatre in Washington City, on or about 14th April, and the Vice President, Andrew Johnson, is now the President. Mr. Johnson has appointed Mr. Holden provisional Governor of North Carolina, who has declared all the civil offices of the State vacant and proposes to call a convention to reconstruct the State government. The military have declared the slaves free, and still occupy the Capitol and important positions in different sections of the State: so that all is chaos and nothing definite for the future. This much may be said with certainty that now, to all intents and purposes, we are a conquered province, held and governed by the strong arm of military power. Mr. R. P. Dick has been appointed United States District Judge in my place. I expect to be arrested and tried for treason and all my property confiscated if what appears to be the intention of the reigning authority is enforced. It is useless for me to extend this gloomy picture. It darkens as it expands, and, as it is viewed more closely. And yet, the Lord reigneth! and I believe nothing will transpire but what *He* permits, and therefore with confidence I leave my all to Him; and conclude this hasty resume of passing events, with some probability, that I may not soon, if ever, continue in this form, any note of future events.

May God bless, guide, and protect you!!

LEE'S FAREWELL ADDRESS[19]

HEAD QRS. ARMY NO. VA., April 10th, 1865.

GENERAL ORDER NO. 9.

After four years of arduous service marked by unsurpassed courage and fortitude, the army of Northern Virginia has been compelled to yield to overwhelming numbers and resources. I need not tell the brave survivors of so many hard fought battles, who have remained steadfast to the last, that I consented to this result, not from any distrust of them, but feeling that valor and devotion could accomplish nothing that would compensate for the loss that must have attended the continuation of the contest, I determined to avoid the sacrifice of those whose past services have endeared them to their countrymen. By the terms of agreement officers and men can return to their homes and remain until exchanged.

You will take with you the satisfaction that proceeds from the consciousness of duty faithfully performed, and I earnestly pray that a merciful God will extend to you his blessing and protection.

With an increasing admiration of your constancy and devotion to your country, and a grateful remembrance of your kind and generous consideration for myself, I bid you all an affectionate farewell.

(Signed) R. E. LEE,
General.

At Appomatox C. H., Va.

[19]Copied in the Scrap-Book in Judge Biggs' handwriting.

THE KANSAS QUESTION[20]

From the Tarboro Southerner of April 17, 1858.

Letter from Hon. Asa Biggs—We copy below from the *Baltimore Republican* the letter of the Hon. Asa Biggs of this State, addressed to the Lecompton meeting recently held in that city. This letter will commend itself to the reader by its sound practical sense and by the clear and correct view which it presents of the present condition of the Kansas question. The Richmond *Enquirer* has paid Col. Biggs the high compliment of copying the letter [as] embodying in the clearest and best manner its own views on this absorbing question.

SENATE CHAMBER, WASHINGTON, March 3, 1858.

GENTLEMEN:—I cannot conveniently attend the mass meeting in Baltimore to which I am kindly invited by yours of 20th ultimo.

The object of the meeting I cordially approve. President Buchanan, in my opinion, should not only be publicly approved, but he deserves the affection of the people, for his bold and patriotic position, in the face of an unprincipled opposition and the defection of some Democrats from whom he had reason to expect better things. I candidly confess that the state of affairs in Kansas for the last three years, has not given me a very exalted opinion of the character of that people for an enlightened self-government: but they partake of the characteristics generally of our border population, who drawn together by a speculating mania and a desire and expectation to make themselves speedily rich, are not very scrupulous about the forms of law.

But what have we in the Lecompton constitution under which it is proposed by the President to admit Kansas? It is a constitution emanating from legal authority and in its adoption all the necessary forms of law, to ascertain the people's will, have been observed. It is no doubt true that there have been fraud and violence and great irregularities in the action of all parties in Kansas: and suppose, as is charged, there was fraud, at the Delaware crossing or other precincts yet it cannot be denied that, deducting this and all other fraudulent votes (as they ought to be with the emphatic condemnation and denunciation of all honest men) still there is an overwhelming *legal* majority of the people of Kansas, voting for delegates and approving the Constitution. If however it be admitted that a majority of people *in* the Territory refused to vote, then to make that an excuse for refusing admission is to encourage *faction* and rebellion against lawful authority.

It may be seriously questioned whether we do not make a dangerous precedent in admitting a state with such a small population: but upon the whole it is evident to my mind, that the contest is one between law and order and faction and rebellion: between peace and agitation: between the supporters of the Constitution and constitutional rights of all the States and those disposed to stir up civil strife and to test the strength of the Union

[20] Copied in the Scrap-Book in Judge Biggs' handwriting.

for political aims and ends. And, in the language of the President, I believe that "the speedy admission of Kansas into the Union would restore peace and quiet to the whole Country. Already the affairs of this Territory have engrossed an undue proportion of public attention. They have sadly affected the friendly relations of the people of the States with each other, and alarmed the fears of the patriots for the safety of the Union. Kansas once admitted into the Union, the excit[e]ment becomes localized and will soon die away for want of outside aliment."

It is palpable that in the admission of Kansas the South only obtains the recognition of a principle what can never be surrendered without dishonor. It cannot be admitted that if the leading doctrine of the opposition, "No more slaveholding States shall ever be admitted into the Union," be practically enforced, it will necessarily work a dissolution of the Union, that Union which is the fondest hope of the patriot here, of the friend of free institutions everywhere. That the South will ever consent in the practical administration of this government to admit her inequality because of the institution of slavery in the States, is to suppose her greatly degenerated in moral instincts and courage and totally unworthy of political [?] association. How can any honorable man calculate that she would tamely submit to such a position of inferiority, which would humiliate her in her own estimation and disgrace her in the eyes of the civilized world? Let all be assured that the *most* conciliatory at the South and those who deprecate a dissolution as one of the greatest calamities that could befall us (of whom I profess to be one) will never yield to this disgraceful alternative. I do not thus write in a spirit of idle alarm. The breach between the extremes is wide. An estrangement of feeling begins to develop itself among the most prudent and moderate, North and South, and it becomes important for them now to understand each other distinctly; calmly to survey the tendency of things, that they may act together promptly and efficiently to avert the catastrophe which threatens us, and which it is idle and criminal to treat with derision. Could we interrogate the leaders of the opposition and obtain a candid answer would they not promptly respond: "If the constitution of the United States were now for the first time to be formed, I would never consent to insert certain provisions therein contained, touching the question of slavery, and I would insist upon other provisions, which would secure the entire extinction of slavery in the State." If they would not make such an avowal, then their present professions are hypocritical and insincere; and if avowed does it not incontestably establish, that their opposition is not merely to the toleration of slavery *in the Territories* but that they are *radically opposed to the Constitution itself*. And will Northern men professing to be Democrats give sanction to such sentiments, and encouragement to such a party? And yet with pain do I witness daily this tendency in a few—*one* at least heretofore looked to and relied upon as a rampart (as we had hoped) prepared and designed to protect the sacred chart of our liberties, and stay the wild tide of fanaticism which threatened the stability of the Union.[21] But if personal disappointment and chagrin or experiments for political promotion seduce many, we may congratulate ourselves that in the President we have one, who with Roman firmness, will not permit the State and Constitution to suffer detriment under his administration.

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[21]Probably a reference to Stephen A. Douglas.

You do well therefore, gentlemen, as you propose, publicly to hold up the hand of the President: to approve and defend his course, the just and grateful reward of a faithful public servant.

I have the honor to be very respectfully
Your obedient servant

ASA BIGGS

Mess. B. H. Richardson, B. C. Presstman, and
J. J. Graves, *Committee of Invitation.*
Baltimore

RESIGNATION FROM THE SENATE[22]

From the Tarboro Southerner of 15 May, 1858.

Hon. Asa Biggs. We publish below a letter from Mr. Biggs, addressed to the people of North Carolina in which he informs them of his resignation of the office of Senator and returns his thanks for honors heretofore conferred upon him. The people of the State have never had a more faithful or conscientious public servant than Asa Biggs. He goes now from political service to a more quiet position but one in which his usefulness will still be widely felt and appreciated. The following is his letter.—*Standard.*

To the People of North Carolina.

In resigning, as I have, the elevated position of Senator of the United States I cannot sever the relation of representative and Constituent, without expressing my feelings of gratitude for the high confidence reposed in me by you: and whatever position I may hereafter occupy, I shall always remember and acknowledge with great sensibility the kind partiality of those generous friends, who placed me in one of the highest, most dignified and responsible offices in the world. My resignation became a duty to my family, those and those only who have a higher claim upon me than the claim of my countrymen to serve in public office. I feel the less regret, because from the Senate I go with the public service in a different capacity more congenial to my feelings and habits, and one in which I trust I may be able to serve my Country not less useful[ly], though in a more retired and quiet sphere. [It] is also with less reluctance because I am confident that in the Executive of our State, we have the assurance of an appointment of such a successor to me as will faithfully reflect your wishes and maintain the high character of North Carolina in the Councils of the Confederacy—a character although not pressed upon public attention with arrogance is sustained with inflexible fidelity: and as I have reason to know is properly and highly appreciated by the wise, considerate and patriotic. Whatever errors I may have committed as your Representative, I entertain an abiding conviction that no tarnish has attached to the fair fame of our venerated commonwealth: and in this I have a becoming pride.

Suffer me in conclusion to repeat my profound acknowledgements and gratitude for the distinguished honor you have conferred upon me; and upon my retirement to impress upon all my country men the importance of sustaining in all our public measures and public men and in all our intercourse as Citizens of this great Union of States, the well earned and cherished reputation of North Carolina as the "honest old North State," although we may occasionally, in this degenerate day, for such an ambition, incur the sneers of witlings and spendthrifts. ASA BIGGS.

Washington, May 4, 1858.

[22]Copied in the Scrap-Book in Judge Biggs' handwriting.

JOURNAL OF A TRIP FROM WILLIAMSTON TO NEW YORK AND BACK IN 1832

Williamston, April 18, 1832.

Left Williamston about 9 o'clock went to Powells to dinner where there was cackling and crowing in the extreme and among the crowd some young men who revel in dissipation and whose heedlessness is a good lesson to those who indulge in vice. Arrived at Nickoles where we staid all night. Here I met with Mr. Simmons Sheriff of Halifax whom I found to be a very pleasant and agreeable man.

[April 19th]. Left Scotland Neck 19th—four passenger—arrived at Winton about dark—to this place had a fine coach and good horses.

[April 20th]. Left Winton 20th about four o'clock with eight passengers and after jolting and considerable fatigue got to Norfolk ½ after three—crossed the river in a steam boat which plies continually. Portsmouth, we passed so soon that I cannot tell much about it. Norfolk has the appearance of considerable business—many of the streets are very dirty. Should'ent suppose the corporation are very vigilant. We travelled in the stage with Genl. Blount of Nashville, N. C. whom I found to be a very pleasant man. We had also two Methodist preachers. They had not much peace and although they assumed a very grave appearance and occasionally groaned yet that had but little effect in checking the glee. We took in on the road a Mr. Craig, from Tallahasse, who is now with me at the Steam Boat Hotel and I think a fine young man. Mr. Shaw, Genl. Blount and the preachers left this evening for Baltimore in the Columbus. She is an elegant Boat.

[April] 21st. After enjoying a good nights rest, with the exception of being once interrupted by the arrival of the Steam Boat, Mr. Craig and myself went over to Portsmouth and from there to the Navy Yard. Here we spent our time very interesting[ly]. We first visited the ship now building called New York, she is a 74: all enclosed in an excellent house —great many mechanics industriously engaged in building her—we went to the top deck—she has three decks—she is constructed of live oak timber almost entirely—she is a huge machine, we next visited the Delaware now lying at the wharf repairing—on board her I met with Dr. Baker, who accompanied us during the balance of our visit—here I could discover more about the management and apparatus of a ship. We next directed our steps to the Dry Dock and in going there we passed a great

many shops and the commanding officer Comr. Warrington residence—which is tastefully arranged. The ship North Carolina is lying out in the stream all covered. The old ships Guirrere [sic] and Macedonia are also lying out in the stream. We arrived at the Dry Dock after passing several stoers [sic] houses and stones yards. Here I cannot attempt a discription of the importance and magnificence of this work. Suffice it to say it is constructed of solid stone in a cavity near, by throwing out the dirt for at least 25 feet below the surface of the water, and sufficiently long for a 74 gun ship to lie in. It is made in the form of a ship. The bottom is well secured by spiling and then solid rock for about six feet deep. It is to be construed [constructed] with gates so as to send a ship in by hoisting. There are now a great many hands engaged in building it, and it will take them twelve months longer to complete it. It is a grand work and bleeds Uncle Sam's pocket to excess I should suppose. Adjacent to it they are building a house and well which is to be used by steam engine to draw off the water from the dock, and when necessary to flood it again so as to float the ship. We returned and examined the arms. Shot and Balls in abundance may be found there and cannons numerous. Passing to and fro the Sentry may be seen, and occasionally a midshipman or L[i]eutenant as stiff as a poker and as proud as my Aung Peg. Upon the whole my visit there was very interesting and I derived some idea how the money was expended in the Navy Department. We crossed the river in a small Steam-Boat for which you have to pay 6¼ cts and it is very accommodating to the public as well as profitable to the owners. The Capt told me that he generally crossed 100 times in the day, and not less on an average, I suppose, cross than 6 or 8 persons. She crosses in four or five minutes. Portsmouth is a very pretty little place, but the corporation are kindred spirits with those of Norfolk.

They neglect their streets and you find them dirty and disagreeable. It is not to be wondered at if malignant fevers are common and fatal in Portsmouth, and more especially in Norfolk.

The Marine Hospital, which you see at a distance from Norfolk is a commanding Spectacle. It appe[a]rs to be a splendid establishment. This morning I went on board the Potomac and Pocahontas. The Pocahontas is a most splendid Boat.

[April] 22st [nd]. Left Norfolk this morning 9 oclock in the Fredericksburg, run 18 miles in an hour and half; passing got a view of the Rip-Raps and Old Point Comfort. The Rip-Raps is an important work—with the aid of a Spye-glass I could ascertain how it was built. It is a solid bed of stone in 18 ft water, about 5 acres. There are 3 or 4 houses on it, and a wharf projects from it. It is truly a great work, and as is

the necessary consequence must have cost an immense quantity of money. But they appeared inconsiderable, when compared with the battery and apparatus on Old Point. Here you see port-holes in every direction, and flags flying. I was informed that 100 guns could be made to bear on the size of a Hhd-head. It is a magnificent spectacle. Any attempt to pass up the river by an enemy would meet with warm work, too warm for comfort. I think it would be utterly impossible for an enemy to pass up between the Battery and the Rip-Raps.

[April] 23th [nd]. This morning about 7 oclock we passed Mt. Vernon. Instinctively I became melancholy and the reflection that there lies the great and good man, our Country's Benefactor, struck me with awe. The Situation of my country in '76, the abject slavery to which we were reduced, the fearless and intrepid Spirits that dared to stand up and defend our rights, the melancholy spectacle which we presented during the great struggle for liberty, the grand instrument with all his virtues shining that effected so much; who by his address could check those disposed to murmur—establish the wavering, and inspire the whole with that love of liberty and equal rights that can effect almost impossibilities, the important advantage we derived from his firmness and wisdom in establishing our republic, all passed in review before my imagination, and could not fail to produce sensations uncommon. A profound reverence for the tomb of Washington, and an earnest desire that the same principles which he taught may continue to be inculcated and which are alone calculated to perpetuate this fair fabric. Mount Vernon is a beautiful situation. It possesses a commanding view of the Potomac. On the opposite point of land, Fort Washington is erected. It would be very difficult for an enemy to pass this place. Arrived at Washington 9 oclock took lodgings at Gadsbys. Here I met with Mr. T. Jones and Mr. Parker from Tarboro, visited the Capitol [as] soon [as] I arrived with Jones. The Capitol is so magnificent that I cannot attempt a description and therefore decline it. Suffice it to say, that the Rotunda is ornamented with four paintings by Trumbull, most superb and to the life. About 11 oclock the two Houses met went H. R. first, where I heard but little, petitions first presented, and then they took up the trial of Houston.[23] This was so insiped that we left and went to the Senate. Here we heard a very interesting debate, on the appropriation for Minister to France. Several members were designated to me. The appropriation was lost by a majority of two. Returned to the Repre-

[23]The trial of Sam Houston. Houston had visited Washington in the interest of the Cherokee Indians. While he was there William Stanberry, a member of Congress from Ohio, charged him with attempting to obtain a fradulent contract for furnishing supplies to the Indians. Houston, in retaliation, attacked Stanberry and beat him severely. He was tried and reprimanded at the bar of the House, and fined $500, but President Jackson remitted the fine.

sentative Hall, which adjourned in a few minutes, after having been engaged in the hearing of Houston's case. At night went to the Theatre, where I was considerably diverted. The celebrated Clara Fisher appeared. She is a beautiful girl, and performs admirably.

[April] 24th. Walked up and examined the Presidents Palace and Secretaries offices. These are elegant. They are situated about 1½ mile from the Capitol at the other end of Penn' Avenue. Returned to the Capitol and in a short time both houses met. Went to the Senate Chamber, where I had Judge Mangum[24] called out, and after delivering my letter he appeared very glad to see me, invited us in the Chamber, where we remained for some time, during which time we heard a discussion on a question for reconsideration of the appropriation vote. Went to the H. R. and delivered my letter to Mr. Carson.[25] He is a very clever man and although according to the rules of the House we could not go into the Hall, he proferred to do anything for us to render us agreeable. The H. R. has been engaged all day in examining testimony on Houston's case. This I consider a complete farce. A useless expenditure of time and money, perhaps will cost the U. S. $100,000, and take up 3 or 4 weeks, and all for a petty assault and battery. It seems to me that our representatives are prostituting the powers vested in them. Mr. Branch[26] and Mr. Brown[27] are absent. After the adjournment of the Houses, went up to the top of the Rotunda although not without being much fatigued. Here we had a view of all the City and the surrounding country. It is 180 feet above the foundation of the building and 215 feet above the level of Penn Avenue.

Washington is a pretty place and kept very clean, go what direction you choose, and you have elegant walks.

[April] 25th. Visited Judge Mangum, who being engaged could not accompany us to the Presidents. Heard him converse about the important question of the decision [sic] of the Supreme Court. Visited the Senate, where I heard a discussion on the apportionment both by Mr. Webster, Dallas, Clayton, Moore and H[a]yne.[28] Clayton is a very good speaker, pleasant in his manner. The H. R. were engaged in the examination of Houston's case. This frets me, whenever I go into the Hall and therefore stay but a very short time.

[April] 26th. Mr. Mangum called on us and accompanied us to the President's. We were soon shown into his room and after introduction

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[24]Willie P. Magnum.

[25]Samuel P. Carson, of Pleasant Garden, N. C., member of Congress, 1825-1833.

[26]John Branch, formerly Secretary of the Navy; then a member of the House of Representatives.

[27]Bedford Brown, senior Senator from North Carolina.

[28]George M. Dallas, of Pennsylvania; John M. Clayton, of Delaware; Gabriel Moore, of Alabama; Robert Y. Hayne, of South Carolina.

[he] appeared very familiar, open and frank, conversed without reserve, his countenance displays good-feeling, he is now very busily engaged. We only remained with him a few minutes. Went to the Capitol visited the Library which is a very pleasant apartment, here I was introduced to Mr. Sheppard of N. C.[29] I was also introduced to Maj. Donaldson.[30] Visited the H. R. there heard the defence of Houston's Counsel, Mr. Key,[31] until the adjournment of the House. The Senate sat today with closed doors. There were a great many persons in the Representative Hall, and gallery. Mr. Key made a very able argument.

[April] 27th. Visited the H. R. with an expectation of hearing Mr. Key close his argument, but soon after I went in they voted to take the yeas and nays on a question of small importance and hearing that Mr. Key was prevented from closing his argument by indisposition, I left the Hall and went to the Senate Chamber. When I went in Mr. [Isaac] Hill from N. H. was reading a speech which was dry and insipid. This is the second time he has spoken, or read if you please, and there is no interest about him, he was succeeded by several Senators and last by Mr. Hayne who spoke about an hour and half, and the House adjourned before he concluded his speech. It was on the General Pension Bill. He was opposed to it. Among other of his arguments he said that every project was afloat now to draw money from the Treasury. He quoted several cases proposed by Senators which he considered entirely foreign from the object of their Legislation and dealt quite harshly with those whose only object it seemed to be, to draw money from the Treasury and devise projects to expend money so as to seem to have an excuse for levying taxes. General Hayne is a handsome speaker and becomes more and more interesting as he proceeds.

The Senate adjourned until Monday next. I believe I shall remain here until Tuesday to hear him conclude his speech. I had some conversation to day with Judge Mangum relative to the Vice Presidency. He says, he is entirely uncommitted on the question. That he shall be governed by the course pursued by the friends of Mr. V. B.[32] in Congress in assisting to adjust the Tariff. If that is adjusted satisfactorily this session, he is willing to go with his friends if the Choice of V. B. be it, but that if it is not settled, and Mr. V. B.'s friends here cooperate with Clay in preventing a settlement, that he shall proclaim to his friends and to the State that he will not support Van Buren, and that it is inconsistent with their interest to do so; and depend upon public sentiment for support; that he cannot consent to vote for a man, no

[29] William B. Sheppard, of Elizabeth City, member of Congress.
[30] Probably Andrew J. Donelson, the President's Private Secretary.
[31] Francis Scott Key, author of "The Star Spangled Banner."
[32] Martin Van Buren.

matter who he may be, who, with his friends, will not assist in moderating this onerous system, but who will join sides with our oppressors. I coincide decidedly with Mr. Mangum, as I have always expressed myself on this subject; not that I would prefer V. B. to any man, but that I conceived him the only man on whom the party would concentrate generally, but that I will not--I can not vote for him, if he and his friends adhere to the policy of the American System and coincide with those who are attempting to fix upon us a system that will ultimately ruin us.

[April] 28th. I visited the parade ground—here were assembled four uniform companies, three of which joined and formed a batallion—the display was quite interesting and the music animating. I marched with them about a mile when they were drawn up before a house and one of the companies was presented with an elegant stand of colors by a young lady. She made some remarks in presenting, which were answered, but as the crowd was so thick I could not hear them. I then visited the House of Representatives. When I went in Mr. Adams[33] was speaking on the appropriation for a minister to France. He was against the conclusion of the Senate and for the appropriation. His remarks were very interesting. On the vote being taken they disagreed with the Senate by a majority of 30—shortly after the house adjourned.

[April] 29th. Sunday. This day I passed heavily—did not even go to church—I walked considerable but upon the whole I spent this day as dull as a Sunday in Williamston which bye the bye is not very lively.

[April] 30th. Took a general walk through the Capitol into all the apartments—concluded my walk at the Senate Chamber, here I met with Judge Mangum who was wofully chagrined with the Tariff report from the Treasury Department—he conceives it will be detrimental to the Southern interest—he thinks the prospect for an equitable adjustment more gloomy now than at any time during this session. We are subject to Colonial vassalage, says he, more intolerable than the causes that led to our Revolution and that the South must be unanimous and manifest a determined resistance by protesting most solemnly against the system before we shall be able to rectify the abuses. Judge Mangum is a genuine Southerner—possessed of warm feelings for their interest, and repudiates the principles of our oppressors; he does not hesitate to call things by their right names and dauntlessly contemns those who sacrifices principles for men or office on the hope of office. I remained in the Senate Chamber for an hour or more when the House went into Executive Session with closed doors and so remained until adjourn-

[33]John Quincy Adams.

ment. I consequently was disappointed in not hearing Mr. Hayne conclude his speech on the Pension Bill. I however spent my time agreeably, for soon after I went to the Hall H. R. Mr. Clayton submitted the long looked for report on the Bank question—before however the report was read Mr. McDuffie[34] rose and in a speech stated his objections to the prominent features of the report which was dictated by the Majority—he was followed by Mr. Clayton, Mr. Conbreling [sic][35] and Mr. Adams and some others and the report was not read before the House adjourned. I presume, though the substance of it was, after an examination of the evidence advising the House not to recharter the Bank. Mr. Clayton is a bold, animated and intrepid speaker. I am disappointed somewhat in Mr. McDuffie—when he rises he appears considerable embarrassed and by no means is an agreeable speaker, I suppose his talent is more in writing than speaking. Great respect though is paid to him especially on this question, silence prevailed, as the discussion has been anxiously looked for for some days past Mr. Conbreling [sic] is quite a pleasant speaker. He s[p]eaks without embarrassment. Mr. Adams is quite a conspicuous member, and speaks on all important questions. His delivery is not very good, his voice weak. On Saturday he split off from the Opposition party and a[r]gued most strenuously for the Appropriation for an out fit of a minister to France. He succeeded in the measure.

May 1st. This morning left Washington and dined at Baltimore. I was considerably disappointed in the country between Washington and Baltimore—for many miles the country is much broken, land poor and miserable buildings—small huts with thatched roofs—you have taverns in abundance—some look more like a pigstys than the mansion of a human being. I passed the battle ground which has nothing to distinguish it and which I should not have known but for information I derived from one of the passengers. I was though interested by a herd of deer 40 in number among which there were many young ones which I saw grazing in a pasture adjacent to the Road. The country is covered with oak and as you approach Baltimore some pleasant hills may be seen shaded by them. We crossed the Rail Road twice—once about 40 feet above it. I stopped at the Indian Queen Hotel and the street adjacent presents a very bustling aspect. I have travelled over Baltimore somewhat this evening. There is considerable business doing ap[p]arently and in some parts the streets are quite pleasant but the reverse is the case in other[s], particularly those when there is much business—they are kept dirty. I have seen some elegant draft horses here and some handsome harness horses.

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[34]George McDuffie, of South Carolina.
[35]Churchill C. Cambreleng, of New York. He was a native of North Carolina.

May 2nd. Went on board the steam boat Carroll at 6 oclock A. M. No person on board that I know. The scenery on the river not very interesting. Baltimore harbor is much smaller than I expected. The scenery on Elk river is quite interesting. I forgot to make some remarks about the girls in Washington and Baltimore. At Washington the streets were crowded with the exquisitely fashionable—they occupied conspicuous places in both Halls. I did not see but few that were pretty—those who attempted to be conspicuous for fashion were generally ugly. They are remarkable anxious to marry I understand and tax their ingenuity to entrap some of the big folks—this disposition I think was manifested by one towards me thinking I expect from *my appearance* I was a member of Congress, Governor of a state or *Attorney General.* She ogled me to excess and to prevent her having the advantage of me I ogled her back again; she was quite a pretty girl! but enough of the ladies of Washington. The street on which I stopped in Baltimore was considerably thronged through the evening with ladies prominading, [sic] some *few* might be called pretty, some dressed excessively fine and some of them were extravantly ugly. Traveled from.....to New Castle on the Rail Road, 16 miles in an hour and 40 minutes, took the steam boat Robt Morris for Philadelphia. The country is level on the Rail Road generally—quite poor for a few miles [from] town but improve as you approach New Castle. Riding on the Rail Road is very pleasant, there was 17 persons in my car, we met several cars loaded with merchandise and it appears that a whole store was packed on them—they carry vast loads, the Horse that drawed [sic] our car after..... did not labour apparently in the least with the load. On board the Boat we had first rate eating and it was so much better than other places that I cannot omit noting it. I got the worth of my 50c here if I ever got it in eating a dinner. The banks of the Deleware [sic] presents a delightful scenery interspersed with houses and green valleys and occasionally a little village. I was much more pleased with the aspect of this country than any I had passed. I arrived at Philadelphia about 4 oclock. I have walked over the city considerable. It is handsomely arranged and some beautiful streets particularly Chestnut. That street presents quite a gay appearance—fashion may be seen sporting along through it and with it some very pretty girls. I am much pleased with this place. I have stop Hushills and

May 3rd. Left Philadelphia in the Trenton at 6 oclock, stopped a few minutes [at] Burlington and Bristol. The scenery on the river still continuous beautiful with pleasant situations. Burlington has some very pretty dwellings on the river. Bristol is a considerable place much larger than I expected to see, we arrived at Trenton where we took the

stage. The road for many miles was good but as we approached the rocks became worse and for the last part of the 25 miles was quite rough. On the south I passed large quantities of stone many places almost complet[e]ly covered some large some small and all the family of stones. We arrived at New Brunswick ½ after 1 and took the Boat Swan. New Brunswick is a much larger place than I expected to see. The country between Trenton and New Brunswick is very pretty. Princeton through which I passed is a delightful place. The Raritan is narrow and crooked for several miles from N. Brunswick but widens as you proceed—some pretty sites on it. I arrived at New York about 6 oclock, put up at U. S. Hotel where I found Mr. Bagley and Wm. Biggs.

May 4th. I have travelled about considerable thro' the city—went with J. B. Townsend to the City Hotel, Exchange, U. S. Bank, Custom House and to complete the variety, visited G. Thorburn seed store, here I was much pleased—attached to the establishment is a fish pond and aviary, the flowers in many directions in full bloom and all presenting an interesting and cheering aspect. I have also visited several merchants to whom I have been introduced but the most appalling part of my excursions to day is yet to be told—while walking up Pearl Street my attention was directed to a crowd running up to Cliff and thinking there was a fire in that direction I also hastened there but when I arrived it turned out to be a splendid ware house 6 stories high just tumbled to the ground burying in its ruins many persons—number unknown supposed to be 10 or 15. It was an awful sight—in a short time the bells commenced ringing and the people collecting and in a few minutes a vast concourse of persons were crowding towards the place. The citizens fell to work immediately in pulling down the beams and Cotton Bales to extricate those underneath them—while I remained there two negroes were taken out—one not much, the other very much injured. I understand there are three clerks missing one of whom the firm (Phelps and Peck) had great confidence in and to whom they were very much attached. He was to be married in a few day to Mr. Phelps daughter. O how inconstant and uncertain are all things here—by a sudden convulsion the fondest hopes may be blasted and our future lives rendered miserable and irksome. A survey of the vast ruins—the reflection on the situation and feelings of the unfortunate sufferers and above all the premature death of the young man who was to be married, the agonizing feelings of his intended bride could not fail to render me u[n]happy—my feeling and my sympathy are very much aroused, and I go to bed under a strong excitement leaving an immense quantity of

people surrounding the place and the firemen busily engaged in removing the rubbish.

May 5th. This morning I hear that five persons have been taken out, 4 alive some severely injured and one dead, three or four are now in sight but cant be got out. I went to see the ruins this morning but vast crowds of people still are in the adjoining streets, they are yet ingaged in removing the rubbish, immense quantities of produce were stored which is scattered in every direction consequently there will be a great loss of property. This day I have travelled about a great deal, visited the ruins once or twice more, it is now enclosed and police guarding it—by a notice in an office I understand there have been 14 persons taken out, 10 of whom were dead. While I was standing surveying this scene the alarm of fire was [sounded] which I followed up Broadway but it ended in smoke as I met an engine returning. By the bye, it must be very perplexing and outrageous unpleasant for the firemen to be called a mile or two from home, fatigue themselves almost to death on a false alarm.

May 6th. This morning with Mr. Bagley, Mr. Shaw and William visited Hoboken which is a very pleasant place, we enjoyed ourselves very well in drinking mead and eating cake and riding on the railroad which is propelled by your own hands. After dinner went to church where I spent my time very agreeable. At night took a long stroll up Broadway returned and went to bed.

May 7th. Visited the City Hall and got admission in to the Governor's Room which was very interesting in examining the paintings that adorn the room; visited the Common Council in which I saw the banner that was displayed in the inauguration of Genl Washington and also the large chair in which he sat when it was performed.

There are several relics of antiquity and in surveying this old arm chair I involuntarily seated myself therein—Why? Because the reflection was pleasant, that I had been seated in the *same chair* which our venerable benefactor had graced—upon the whole my visit here was quite interesting. I spent the balance of the day in walking the streets of the city and at night went to the Park Theatre, here I was considera[b]ly amused by the opera of Cinderella. They displayed some splendid scenery and the last a view of Mount Vesuvius was grand. There was a crowded house being the benefit of Miss Hughes a popular actress.

[May] 8th. This day I have spent in walking about town and riding. I went up to Greenwich—here are some pretty dwellings and not so much crowded but it was with difficulty I could keep my eyes, for it was quite

windy and clouds of dust flying in every direction. I staid there but a short time and hurried home with my eyes filled with dirt—had a very agreeable evening with J. and W. [?] Townsend.

[May] 9th. Left New York with Mr. Bagley and William in the steam boat Swan, arrived at Philadelphia ½ after 6. I was very much pleased with the scenery this day, especially the land carriage from New Brunswick to Trenton; part of the time I rode on the outside with the driver, which gave me a good opportunity of surveying the country. Princeton, and the adjacent country, is a lovely place, vegetation has put forth considerable since I passed here last Thursday.

[May] 10th. Left Philadelphia this morning and arrived at Baltimore about 4 oclock in the evening. Mr. Shaw was here passed a very pleasant evening in promenading the streets, here I met again with Mr. Craig—tonight we all visited the theatre and heard the humurous play of Col. Nimrod Wildfire by Hacket. I was very much amused at the many quaint expressions used.

[May] 11. Left this morning 9 oclock in the steam boat Columbus and arrived at Norfolk about 5 oclock next morning; part of the night the sea was quite heavy, and the boat cracked enough to scare rats.

[May] 12. At Norfolk we took the stage and arrived at Edenton about 9 oclock P. M. On this route we had a lively party—spent the time quite agreeable. We had a dusty road and on one stage a deficiency of horses that retarded us at least an hour. After taking supper at Hoskin's we went on board the steam boat and the night was pleasant—the moon shone very bright. We arrived at Jamestown about 4 oclock in the morning—here Mr. Bagley and William left in a double gig for Williamston, leaving me to bring up the baggage and take passage in a canoe; and here to cap the climax of communications and vehicles I was wofully chagrined, for I found a strong stream to contend with, and it was with difficulty we could stem the torrent; after several hours of hard struggling we landed at Williamston very much gratified to be able to put my foot on land and stretch my legs; found all my friends well; and thus ends the narration of my small travel.

Asa Biggs.

Finis.